Growing Parent®

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Seeing the humorous side of parenting

By Donna R. Crossman

When my daughter was an infant, I remember leaning over her crib to encourage her first smile. As she grew older, we laughed and giggled together over "patty-cake" and "peek-a-boo" games.

For parents, laughing and playing with a child is a delightful experience. However, when a child becomes uncooperative or stubborn, we tend to lose our sense of humor and become angry and frustrated.

There's nothing humorous about a ten-month-old who doesn't want to sleep at bedtime. A rebellious two-year-old whose favorite word is "no" is definitely not funny.

Having a sense of humor can diffuse the anger and frustration that you sometimes feel when you must cope with a cranky child. Humor can help you remain calm as you deal with parenting problems.

Here are a few ways that you can use humor to cope and at the same time turn your child's tears to laughter.

• Assemble a humor first aid kit.

Fill a small picnic basket or a large box with items that encourage fun and laughter. Your infant will enjoy a "squeaker" toy or a jack in the box. A package of animal crackers or a book of silly rhymes can amuse a toddler.

Reach for your humor first aid kit when you need emergency measures to control your short temper and to amuse your restless child. Humoring yourself and your child for five minutes using the materials in the kit will relax and energize you.

• Tell a joke with meals.

Meals are often a time of conflict between parent and child. As part of your meal time conversation, divert your child's attention with jokes and silly riddles. Children especially like knock-knock jokes. Check with your local library or bookstore for resources.

Relate humorous anecdotes about your own childhood to your child. He or she will like sharing your past, and you will enjoy reminiscing about a pleasant, carefree time of life.

• Discover the child within yourself.

When you are overwhelmed by the responsibilities of parenting, take time out to play with your child. Play, for both children and adults, encourages laughter

and is a healthy release for tension and stress.

Do all the things with your own child that you haven't done since you were young. Build a castle in the sandbox. Lay on your back outside in the grass and identify shapes in the clouds. Have a tea party and invite all of your child's stuffed animals.

Singing silly nursery rhymes

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like "this little piggy went to market" or "the itsy bitsy spider" are good "time out" activities.

Encourage your child's fantasies. Play along with your child's imaginary friends and help slay the dragons. Not only will you laugh and have fun, but you will better understand thoughts and feelings that your child is unable to express.

• Allow yourself to be imperfect.

Set a mistake quota every day and record your bloopers in a notebook. Six months from now read what you wrote and you'll laugh at your blunders.

You'll also realize that your children have survived despite your misjudgments. Most likely, too, your self-esteem will improve when you recognize how much you have learned about parenting in such a short time.

• Tell your problems to a friend whose children are older.

Most likely, she has successfully coped with crayon drawings on the wall and an almost-toilet-trained toddler. Having gone through it all, your friend can help you put your frustrations in perspective and show you the humor in parenting.

• In your mind, replay a conflict you previously had with your child.

Think about how you could have changed the situation if you had reacted with humor instead of anger. Planning what you will do or say the next time your child misbehaves will help you control your emotions in the "heat of the moment."

• Smile, even if you don't feel like it.

Your facial expressions reveal your inner emotions. For example, when you are angry, you frown.

However, psychologists know that if you want to change your feelings, you must first change your behavior. So smile when your child spills his milk again at dinner, and the situation won't seem quite as bad.

• Draw silly pictures.

When your child is uncooperative, distract him or her with crayons and paper. While your child is amused, draw a picture of a situation that makes you angry. Be sure to draw with the opposite hand than you usually write with. The finished product will certainly be ridiculous, but you just might detect some humor in your predicament.

• Play candid camera.

Keep your camera handy and catch your child in the act of being himself. Take his picture when he is whining or doing something that you don't approve of.

Viewing your child through the camera lens will allow you to stand back for a moment and see his behavior from a different perspective. When the pictures are developed you can appreciate your child's unique personality again and again.

• Learn to juggle.

Psychologists, in all seriousness, advise patients who are under a great deal of stress to practice juggling. It's a great way to relax and have fun. You have to concentrate so hard on not dropping the balls that you don't have time to dwell on your problems.

Before you attempt to juggle baby food jars or apples, practice with brightly colored scarves that fly slowly through the air. Infants will be fascinated by the display and toddlers will want to join in on the fun.

• Build a humor library.

Collect picture books for your children that are funny. Read a couple of your favorites when your child is fidgety.

Stock your library with books by authors that treat the job of parenting humorously. Two of my favorites are Erma Bombeck and Bill Cosby. They help parents understand that their problems are universal and that their children are normal.

Videotape TV sit-coms that show the humorous side of family life. When your child naps, take a humor break, watch one of them, and have a good belly laugh.

• Use your imagination.

When my daughter and I are unhappy we play the "what if" game. We try to imagine what our world would be like if we could fly or if everything we touched turned to candy.

Invent make-believe stories. Tell your child the first half of a fairy tale, then create your own ending.

• Exchange roles with your child.

Children love to imitate adults. For an hour pretend that your child is the parent and you are the child. It's fun to see yourself as your child sees you.

• Keep a diary of your child's first five years.

Capture the frustrating moments of parenting in writing. But instead of telling the story from your point of view, pretend your child is the narrator. You'll enjoy putting yourself in your child's shoes as you try to imagine what he or she is thinking and feeling.

• Find entertaining activities in your community.

Most towns offer plays, magic shows, story hours, and other activities that are fun for children and parents.

While out in public, observe how other parents relate to their children. You'll relax when you see that they are faced with the same problems that you are dealing with. It's humorous to watch them make the same mistakes you have made.

Donna Crossman is a high school English teacher and freelance writer. She lives with her husband and daughter in Scotia, New York.

Are there days you'd rather not be a parent?

By Barbara Albers Hill

"Don't you just love this stage?" exulted a mother I met at the park recently.

We had just discovered that her younger daughter and my younger son were both 15 months old. "Everything is so new and exciting to them!"

"No!" I wanted to shout.

I'd just spent the better part of an hour trying to keep my toddler happy in his stroller so that his brother and I could dig in the sandbox for a little while and when he'd finally revolted, chasing him out of the path of swings, bicycles, balls and two gents playing shuffleboard.

My boys are equally precious to me, but I find that I have a lot less patience with toddlerhood the second time around. Now, watching the other mother clearly enjoying her child's nonstop activity, I felt guilty for the many times I've clenched my teeth and hoped for a quick end to a particularly trying stage.

No matter how wonderful our youngsters may be, nearly all of us will admit to occasionally wishing that they'd hurry and grow up. The truth is, we all sometimes tire of the role of mother, and it helps to look ahead to the days when our children will be less demanding of our time, patience and creativity.

Indulging in daydreams about the project, degree or job you plan to pursue when your children mature and need you less is nothing to feel guilty about. In fact, such planning ahead may help you adapt to a change in role when the time arrives.

And if nothing else, imagining a time when life will be less harried and draining can prove a soothing antidote to a particularly aggravating day.

Sometimes, frustrated mothers even question the wisdom of their having had children in the first place. Mary Ann, the mother of three children under five, finds that it helps to remind herself often that their childhoods will pass all too quickly and that her former job as a teacher also had its share of frustrations.

A woman's feelings about mothering are often closely tied to the ups and downs of life with her children. After sharing a particularly heart-warming moment with one or both of my sons, I have, on occasion, felt a fleeting regret that I started my family too late to have a half dozen little ones running around. But an hour later, I find myself yearning for the days when my boys will go off to a friend's to play. It all seems to depend on how things are going that day.

It helps to know that I'm not alone with my fluctuating maternal energy. I find it reassuring to share my feeling with my spouse and other mothers.

I also try to avoid comparing my mothering abilities to certain women in my environment who never seem to have a bad day. Agonizing over the fact that my days lacked the serenity these mothers and their families exhibit so consistently used to take its toll on my self-confidence, but I know now that people simply have different organizational skills, different frustration thresholds and different ways of expressing their disgruntlement.

These days, I'm trying harder to appreciate my toddler's many endearing qualities, while laughing at his foibles — for they'll very soon be a memory. As I watch my boys travel the road to adulthood and independence, I will probably always have mixed emotions, feeling torn between pride in their accomplishments and a longing for the time when I was the center of their lives.

Recognizing this helps me keep the bad days in perspective and makes the many good ones all the more precious!

Barbara Albers Hill is a former teacher who lives on Long Island with her husband and two sons, ages four and one. She writes frequently on parenting topics.

Is your family poison proofed?

By Corrie Player

Except for car accidents, poisonings are the leading cause of death and disability for children under five.

Parents, equipped with common sense awareness of potential dangers and some knowledge of first aid, can prevent thousands of these needless tragedies.

Experts agree that most poisonings occur when children are hungry and parents are distracted (mealtime) or during social upheavals when children are unsupervised. As a parent, you must keep your "parental antenna" tuned and not relax your vigilance.

My six-year-old son climbed up on a cabinet near where I kept paint and turpentine just as the phone rang. Although I knew he could work the safety latch on the door, I only glanced at him as I picked up the phone; I figured he'd passed beyond the typical poisoning age.

But I suddenly realized he'd poured turpentine into a glass and leaped for him just as he raised it to his lips. He answered my dismayed questions with, "I wondered what it tasted like."

Things look different from down here

Crawling babies are most likely to be poisoned because they have no aversion to anything. Curiosity makes the most disgusting, lethal, or filthy items fair game. Babies' sensitive mouths directly connect them to the environment.

I've seen my children grab an unfamiliar object and close their eyes as they licked and mouthed it.

Over the years, I've found bits of crayon, clay, chalk, and scraps of wall paper in the diapers I've changed. Toddlers will drink kerosene, swallow battery acid, and chew asphalt shingles.

With the understanding in mind that babies would rather taste than see, hear, touch or smell, you should take your child's eye view of the world. Spot poisonous situations then change the situation by moving, locking up, or throwing away.

Even though children may seem to be beyond the "everything in the mouth" stage, they keep the urge to put new things in their mouths for many years (as did my boy with the turpentine).

Prevention through cleanliness

A clean house prevents many poisonings.

Clean housekeeping doesn't mean surgery-ready tables and sterilized floors; rather, it means you pick up bits of cellophane, splinters, and dead flies as you sweep and dust.

If I don't vacuum the cat hair and paper shreds, my babies' tiny fingers seek and find the most minute bits. I try to channel that seeking energy. I teach my toddlers to bring pins and leaves to me; I exclaim over their dexterity and ability to spot things. Then I wait until the child's attention is diverted before I throw away any "offering."

Rotten food can also be a source of poisoning. Refrigerators should be wiped out and cleaned regularly. One of my hungry preschoolers almost had to have her stomach pumped when she helped herself to some old chicken I'd planned on giving the dog.

Insects can be sources of poison, because they walk through insecticides or carry germs. Babies will eat any bug they can catch. Eliminating food supplies by keeping crumbs and spills wiped up discourages most pests.

Out of reach, out of eating range

Other sources of poisoning you might overlook are: glove compartments, purses, closets, and garages.

Check your purse and/or

glove compartment. Are you carrying ibuprofen or other over the counter pain killers, car sickness tablets, or allergy pills? What about insect repellent and matches?

Dump the contents on the floor and pretend you are three years old. Then pick up each object and analyze what would happen if you put it in your mouth. If you must carry prescription drugs, close and store your purse up high. Lock the glove compartment and carry the key on your key ring.

Simple spring hook latches at least five feet off the floor will keep garage, closet, and bathroom doors off limits to tiny adventurers.

I keep necessary medicines in the kitchen rather than in the bathroom because I spend more time in the kitchen than any other room in the house.

Ideally, you should padlock medicines and wear the key, but I'm not that obsessed. I secure the kitchen medicine cabinet with the same spring latches that I put on doors I don't want opened.

I keep only soaps, potting soil, and other non-lethal substances under the sink, because my cabinets are locked with those spring secured latches. I store disinfectants, furniture and silver polish, cleansers, etc. in a high cabinet where they are less handy for me (and my child).

Decorative but dangerous

House plants are often overlooked as a source of poisons. Plants may be intrinsically poisonous or they may have been sprayed with insecticide.

When baby is born, throw out, fence off, or hang from the ceiling the following common plants: poinsettia, deffenbachea, azalea, English ivy, daffodils, holly, and philodendron.

If you live in a moderate or warm climate, keep in mind that such plants are as poisonous in the yard as in the house. Never plant them where children play.

Education is the best prevention

Just as toddlers can learn to bring dangerous pins, leaves, and plastic to you, older children can learn respect for poisonous substances through your instruction. Never tell children their vitamins or antibiotics are "candy," even if such statements get them to take a dose more easily.

Instead, point out every time you give (or take) medicine that medicine helps sickness only if it is taken in small, specific doses. One spoon of decongestant or vitamin tablet is all they can have at one time. If they take more, it will make them sicker or kill them dead; only mommy or daddy (or responsible big person) knows how much to give.

When the worst happens

When all prevention fails and Samantha eats Grandpa's heart medicine, remember two simple points:

1. Whatever went in needs to come out, with one vital exception. Never bring up that which will cause as much or more damage on the way up as it did on the way down. Caustics and petroleum products are in this category.

2. "Vomitable" and "non-vomitable" poisons both should be diluted and/or neutralized as much as possible.

Tape the number of a poison control center or the nearest hospital to your phone. Also, keep syrup of ipecac on hand (a pleasant-tasting stomach irritant which usually produces vomiting in a few minutes).

When you realize your child might be poisoned, grab the container on your way to the phone, so you know the exact ingredients.

If the child is unconscious or groggy, don't wait to call. Don't induce vomiting or give the child anything to eat, either. Get to an emergency room as fast as you can; call an ambulance if necessary.

If the poisoned child is conscious (and you're not dealing with caustics, acids, or petroleum products), induce vomiting with the syrup of ipecac.

As a last resort you can make a kid throw up by sticking your finger down her throat and leaning her over, so she doesn't choke. Hold your finger in until the child's stomach is empty; as soon as you take your finger out, she'll stop vomiting.

The finger-down-the-throat method is gross and frightening, but effective. It should remain "emergency only."

If you are away from help when a child swallows kerosene, gasoline, lye, or battery acid, the best you can do is dilute and protect. Large amounts of water, bread or milk help and are the easiest to get down. Egg white and salad oil are good too, but they might make things worse by bringing on vomiting.

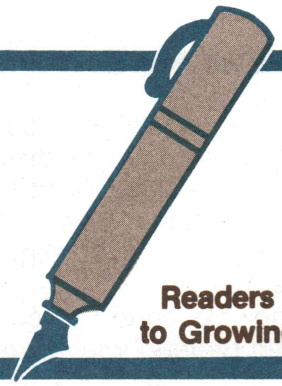
Remember your high school chemistry. Caustic bases, like lye, can be partially neutralized with acidic foods like grapefruit or orange juice. Neutralize acids with baking soda or other edible bases.

If all your prevention fails and you find Donny sucking a battery or munching the poinsettia, call the hospital, empty the stomach (unless caustics or petroleums are involved), then dilute and neutralize.

With thanks to James C. Tedford, MD.

Corrie Player is the mother of eight children ranging in age from six to 22. Her articles about children and families have appeared in several national magazines. She holds a master's degree in education and English from Stanford University and teaches writing in public and private schools.

Dear Growing Child



Readers write to Growing Child

Bathtime vigilance

I found some helpful hints in the article, "Are you spending too much time cleaning house?" in the August issue.

However, I strongly disagree with the author's suggestion to save time while a toddler is taking a bath by "emptying the trash, mopping the floor," etc.

While we know an infant should never be left unattended in a bathtub, neither should a toddler.

Toddlers are active and mobile little people. In a split second, while a parent's back is turned, a child could easily stand up in the tub and fall or turn on the hot water and be burned.

We're all looking for ways to save time, but I don't think this is the place to do so.

Mrs. Juli Bjurstrom
Enumclaw, WA

Unwinding

My husband and I have found some simple but effective ways to relax and refuel ourselves while stimulating our 5-month-old son at the same time.

As a stay-at-home, breast-feeding mom, I need some space to unwind when Dad comes home.

Rather than unceremoniously dump Joshua on his lap the minute he arrives, we decided that that part of the day would be my "exercise time."

I warm up, jog for a mile, cool down, take a brisk shower and feel 100% better and more energetic. Not only is this good for me, but Dad and son get some extra "private time" together.

Our other ritual is the weekend "sleep-in." On Saturdays I feed Joshua at the regular time but afterward his dad takes over. Usually they go for an early morning stroll to the lake, which they both enjoy.

Sunday, of course, Dad gets his turn to sleep in.

These are little things, but they really do mean a lot to us!

Robin & Barton Milburn
Reston, VA

Only child

My son is eight months old, and I have really wrestled with whether or not to have another child. I had fertility problems with him and I am 29 years old.

Your article on "onlies" really eased my mind a lot. I still haven't decided definitely—more children or not—but it was so nice to hear some positive information about only children.

Every time I tell a friend that I may have no more, they say it's unfair to my son. Even my doctor said, "A parent cannot be a child's best friend—only a brother or sister can fill that spot."

So, thanks for the news that "onlies" can be well-adjusted, happy kids.

Terri L. Paul
St. Louis, MO

Hospital tests

After reading the mother's advice to "hospital parents" whose children must have lab tests, I'd like to offer another helpful hint.

Should a child require a lab test that involves a needle and an X-ray, I'd recommend bringing the child for the X-ray first.

Often I deal with children who have had a blood sample drawn prior to an X-ray. The child becomes frightened, assuming I, too, am going to hurt him. An agitated child is less likely to cooperate by holding still and this is essential to quality X-rays.

I realize having the X-ray first is not always possible, but when it is, it is helpful.

Lezlee Miller
Half Moon Bay, CA

Asthma sufferer

My son was diagnosed at three months as having acute intrinsic bronchial asthma. We have had an interesting year to say the least. Along with his asthma, he suffers with "food reactions." They aren't called allergies yet.

I would be interested in any correspondence with any subscriber who has or is dealing with asthma or any information you can point me to. I'm learning day by day as I'm sure other parents have.

G. Gaye King
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The American Baby TV Show

On CBN Cable Network

Mondays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT
Fridays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT

Research Briefs

Excerpts from child development research

Car seats still present problems for parents

Getting parents to use car safety seats is easier than getting them to use the seats correctly, accordingly to an Indiana study.

Misuse of car seats can and does contribute to serious injury and even the death of child passengers.

Researchers observed 618 parents in shopping malls as they struggled to insert and secure their offspring in safety seats. Seat belts were not included.

Four hundred forty-one of the restraints were convertible or toddler seats; 128 were booster seats and 49 were restraints for infants.

Incorrect use

The team reports that the frustrated adults incorrectly used 74 percent of the convertible/toddler seats, 72 percent of booster seats for bigger children and 82 percent of "infants only" restraints.

The percentage of botch-ups remained the same through two observation periods—one in the autumn of 1983 before Indiana enacted a law mandating the use of car safety seats, and one in the fall of 1984, a year after the law took effect.

Although the use of protective car seats skyrocketed from 37 percent to 73 percent in that time, the percentage of misuse dropped only three percentage points—from 76 to 73 percent. Amazingly, there was little the parents did right once they wrestled the child into the seat.

Most common mistakes

The most common mistakes:

- Not using the car's seat belt to anchor the safety seat.
- Failing to fasten the tether strap at the top of some models.
- Leaving harness straps unfastened.
- Not using the padded shields that protect the child's midsection in some models.
- Failing to position infant seats so that babies under 20 pounds and shorter than 26 inches faced the rear of the car.

Research team members were from the Department of Pediatrics and Automotive Safety for Children Program, James Whitcomb Riley Hospital for Children, and the Indiana University School of Nursing.

Growing Child Research Review
Vol. 6, No. 7

More obstetricians opt out of baby business

Thanks to inflated insurance premiums and the high risk of malpractice suits, record numbers of obstetricians are avoiding high-risk pregnancy cases or simply dropping out of the baby business altogether, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists report.

While the 12 percent drop-out rate has been steady for the past two years over all, some states—Florida, for example—have lost one quarter of their baby deliverers. Rural women throughout the nation will be especially hard hit if the current trend continues since obstetricians already tend to cluster in large cities and suburban areas.

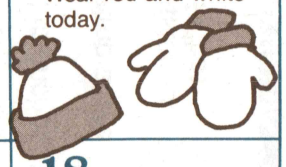
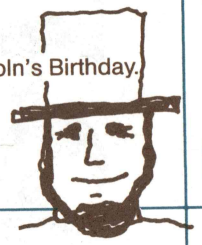
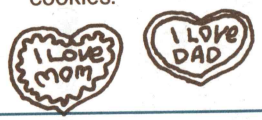
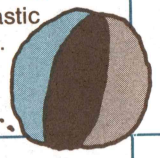
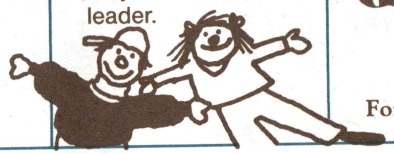
Women with high-risk pregnancies are also threatened, as the number of doctors who limit their treatment of such cases continues to rise.

In 1983, 18 percent of specialists declined to take on tough deliveries; today's figure is 27 percent.

Growing Child Research Review
Vol. 6, No. 8

These brief reports are presented to add to readers' general knowedge of research being done in the child development field. Inclusion of an item does not imply that Growing Child recommends or endorses a particular practice, theory, or finding.

Fun things to do in February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Is there snow on the ground? Make a snow dog.	**2** Groundhog Day. What is a groundhog?	**3** Draw on a chalkboard.	**4** Clap hands slowly . . . then fast . . . then in a steady rhythm.
5 Learn the words to a new song.	**6** Play copy cat together: wave, make faces . . .	**7** Look in the mirror. Who do you see?	**8** ASH WEDNESDAY	**9** Make a Valentine for someone special!!!	**10** Go to the bank and get five new pennies in celebration of Lincoln's Birthday.	**11** Wear red and white today. 
12 Lincoln's Birthday. 	**13** Make heart-shaped cookies. 	**14** Valentine's Day. Tell everyone in your family how much you love them.	**15** Leftover cereal boxes, plastic bowls, and milk cartons make great toys.	**16** Play inside with a small plastic beach ball. 	**17** Slow dance with Youngster to soft music before you put her to bed.	**18** Go outside and look at your "breath."
19 Play outside in the afternoon and then have a treat—hot chocolate.	**20** President's Day. What is the name of our president?	**21** Count the plants in your house.	**22** Tape record Youngster's favorite song with Mom or Dad's singing along.	**23** Look out the window in the morning—what do you see?	**24** Mix water, oil, and food coloring in a clear detergent bottle—what happens?	**25** What does "amigo" mean? "Amigo" means "friend" in Spanish.
26 Throw a big blanket over some chairs—put your sleeping bag inside and take a nap.	**27** Talk to each other through a paper towel tube.	**28** Play follow the leader. 	**Growing Child** A Division of Dunn & Hargitt, Inc. For children 6 months to 6 years			

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Growing Parent®

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Surprise! (What No One Told You About Being A Parent)

By Joan Wester Anderson

Like many women, Kate approached motherhood with all kinds of expectations.

She assumed new babies slept most of the time, and had purchased some needlepoint kits to help fill the quiet hours.

Kate believed that infant caretaking was an instinctive, natural process and would come easily; and because she was in good physical condition, expected to regain her energy quickly.

Now, eight months after her son was born, Kate grins ruefully. "Was I wrong! Far from being a routine experience, I've been astonished and unprepared at every turn."

Kate's reaction to motherhood is actually the norm rather than the exception, according to Ellen Galinsky, author of *Between Generations: The Six Stages of Parenthood* (Times Books, 1981).

After interviewing hundreds of couples, Galinsky says she was struck by the gap between their prenatal expectations and what actually occurred after the baby arrived.

While parents-in-waiting enjoyed planning and imagining how they would comfort a fussy baby, for example, or divide childcare tasks, their dreams were often at odds with the way things worked out.

"Being knowledgeable about children . . . may lesson the shock," Galinsky concludes. But

there are bound to be surprises, things as one mother puts it, "that you just have to find out for yourself."

Here are some of the most common:

- **I never realized how much time a new baby takes.**

No matter how many books you read or how often experienced friends warn you, most new mothers agree that it's impossible to understand what's involved.

"No one can know what feeding a baby every two or three hours is like until they've done it," Kate points out.

"When the baby fell asleep, I'd try to get something done, but soon he'd be up and fussing again. I was feeding him all day, and eating my own lunch at four in the afternoon."

"I wasn't prepared for the interruptions," adds Barbara, a freelance artist. "I was accustomed to sitting down and accomplishing something, and I became frustrated that the baby was keeping me from doing what I *ought* to do."

According to Judith Meyer-Walls, professor of child development at Purdue University, such a reaction is typical, especially among couples who plan their pregnancies carefully.

"While there are many good reasons to delay parenthood, people who are used to controlling their lives can be jolted by an infant's demands," she explains.

"Somehow they never factored into their plans the reality of a crying baby — and a leaky diaper — at 2 a.m."

Myer-Walls suggests that mothers be realistic about their self-expectations. "Once you add parenthood to your life, other things must be sacrificed. Don't

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try to be superparent and super executive/homemaker at the same time."

Barbara agrees. "When I decided that the baby comes first — and any other accomplishment that day is a bonus — life got easier. This time goes very fast and we'll never get it back, so other things can wait."

• I was most surprised about breastfeeding.

"I always figured it would be easy because it's natural — just get started and off we go. But it wasn't like that at all."

Most women go through an adjustment period of about four to six weeks, when fatigue, rebalancing hormones and occasional breast and nipple tenderness can make nursing difficult.

To cope, "read everything you can about nursing; it will take the mystery out of it" suggests Karen Hull, author of *The Mommy Book* (Zondervan, 1986). And it's important to ask questions too.

Your local La Leche League chapter is a good source of encouragement, and if you can find a mentor/friend who nursed successfully (and enthusiastically), so much the better.

• I never thought I'd miss my job.

Ironically, women who've longed for some relief from the office treadmill often find themselves missing their former lives. "Not getting a paycheck bothered me," one mother recalls. "I never realized how much our spending habits would change after the baby arrived."

Other stay-at-homes missed the office social life, the daily camraderie that the "Outside World" offers. A recent study also concluded that mothers who once held responsible positions miss the idea of having power and being in control. This is understandable because today's career woman has trained for her job, and knows how to manage herself and her responsibilities; however, being thrown into parenthood — a job learned best by "doing" — can be traumatic.

"There really aren't enough supports out there; parents seem to be starving for information," says Meredith Censullo, psychologist at Massachusetts General Hospital. "They need input; 'tell me what to do, and that I'm doing it right.' If we can nurture the parents, they'll nurture the child."

• I didn't expect our marriage to take second place.

The birth of a baby is a turning point in one's marital relationship; time and energy that a couple have been used to sharing exclusively with one another are now directed toward caring for, and getting to know the baby.

A husband may secretly resent his child or feel jealous at the attention the baby gets from his wife; a wife may feel guilty about the shift in her energy from her husband to her baby, or her diminished sexual interest. She might also be threatened at the prospect of sharing childcare responsibilities with her husband.

These reactions are part of the normal transition from being husband and wife to being parents, experts say, and couples should talk about how they feel, and ask for the help they need.

Women with ambivalent attitudes about sharing parenthood need to remind themselves that children benefit greatly from a variety of nurturing techniques. And the more care a Daddy provides, the more rest a still-tired Mom can get.

Couples should also work at scheduling "just us" time. "I took advantage of every babysitting offer I received, even if I thought I was too tired to go anywhere," one mother says.

• I never realized what a good job my parents did.

Becoming a parent gives people more understanding of their origins, more tolerance of their parents as people who have themselves passed through different phases.

"Once you're a parent yourself, you begin to comprehend the fears, the hopes, the anger and bewilderment that every Mom or Dad goes through," observes Bev, the mother of two- and three-year-old girls.

"My mother raised six children, and my respect for her has soared now that I see the effort and care she put into it. And I finally see why she always worries about us, even though we're grown up."

Accepting your parents' failings — and even forgiving them for their mistakes — gets easier after you are parents, most couples agree.

Parenthood can also be the key that unlocks the door to a new relationship. "My mother has treated me like an adult for many years," one woman reports "but it took the birth of my son for my father to see me that way."

And although there may be occasional generational conflicts as babies grow, supportive grandparents play a unique role — they act as mentors by suggesting time-honored childcare techniques young parents haven't heard about, and they fill the couple with emotional nourishment, often when they need it most. "I never would have expected it," says Bev, "but my mother and I are closer now than we've ever been."

No one is more inexperienced than a first-time parent. But time, and trusting your own instincts, can help you adapt to this unfamiliar terrain — and to all the wonderful surprises yet to come.

Joan Wester Anderson is a wife, mother of five and freelance author of books, articles and short stories, many of them dealing with family topics.

Family travel fun comes from being prepared

By Barbara Albers Hill

Parents have to expect the unexpected when going anywhere with their children, for the simple act of journeying away from home often seems to bring on a string of calamities.

You can never be completely prepared, but by devoting some thought to the various aspects of any outing, you can avoid all but the most unforeseeable mishaps.

Distance

When planning a trip which will include young children, give serious consideration to the way they customarily respond to the mode of travel you'll be using.

If they usually balk at being confined to a car seat, it might be better to wait six months before attempting that three-hour drive and, instead, select a closer destination.

Similarly, children who still require seat restraints will not do well on buses, boats or trains.

Planning your departure for and return from day trips for early morning, late at night, naptime and/or non-rush hours, can make the travel portion of your excursion as stress-free as possible for all concerned.

Time required

The younger the child, the shorter the attention span. Particularly for children under three (whose good cheer is likely to disintegrate in two hours or less), all-day jaunts which do not include provisions for napping, exercise and free play are probably a mistake.

No matter how exciting the destination, even an older child will become bored by too long of a visit. Even when trips are kept short, be prepared to pack up for home at the first sign of discontentment, since pushing for those few extra minutes usually results in steadily worsening exhibitions of rebellion.

Weather

Even if the site of your adventure is to be indoors, weather can be a factor in its effect on traffic and transit conditions.

Outdoors, a damp, chilly, sticky, overheated or windblown child is going to be uncomfortable. In his misery, he is fully capable of spoiling the day for the whole family.

It helps to have an alternate outing in mind in case of harsh weather, but if the destination itself is very important, be flexible enough to postpone the trip until another day.

Interest level

No excursion will have equal appeal to all family members.

When planning your outing, you can avoid potential misbehavior stemming from boredom, fear or confusion by carefully considering your child's attention span as well as those things which ordinarily frighten or appeal to him.

Aiming a bit higher than your child's normal interest level is fine if you approach the day's sightseeing or activities from his viewpoint, but if the events around him are completely over his head you'll probably be going home early!

Cost

Admission and food prices, gas, tolls or other transportation costs become serious considerations when planning a junket with youngsters. My family discarded several plans when we realized that spending $20 or $30 for what might conceivably be only two hours of entertainment simply wasn't worth it. Here are a few suggestions, grouped according to the ages at which certain activities would begin to have appeal:

Facilities

If you're not sure what food and bathroom facilities are available at your destination, call ahead and find out.

When in doubt, pack a lunch, snacks, extra diapers or a change of pants.

Planning, packing and taking a family trip

1) Leave early in the day. Since most young children are at their best in the morning, get an early start whenever possible.

2) Keep excursions short. It's better to have the little ones beg to stay longer than to have them crying to go home.

3) Schedule outings around naps, if possible. Little children need that midday rest, particularly on days which vary from the routine.

4) For children beyond the nap stage, some attractions are nearly empty in the late afternoons when school groups and families with older children have already departed.

5) Choose your date carefully. Consider local camp and/or school schedules, then decide which weeks might be least crowded. Where admission is charged, call to determine whether discount days are offered, since these will probably draw crowds.

6) Allow time for exercise. One parent keeps a ball in the car for a rousing game of "catch" before the family starts home.

7) Dress your children in dark-colored clothing. No matter where you're going, there will be grease, grass stains, dust, mud, or food.

8) Bring a change of clothes, extra diapers, and jackets, no matter how short a time you plan to be out.

9) Carry a thermos of water and plastic cups. Even on cool days, children like to take breaks. Toting a thermos can save you a stop at a refreshment stand or can quench thirsts before the ride home.

10) Carry cassettes of children's music to play in the car. When tempers get short, familiar music or stories can provide children with a welcome distraction.

11) Keep a basket of toys, toy catalogs and books in the car, and rotate its contents. Most children don't mind a long drive quite as much when they're occupied.

12) Bring snacks. The treats you provide are up to you, but a snack can soothe criers, distract complainers, and occupy the bored by keeping little hands and mouths busy!

13) Attach a bag to the handle of your stroller. The bottom basket usually cannot hold everything you'll bring along.

14) Always carry moistened towelettes or a damp washcloth in a plastic bag. Whether or not you'll be changing diapers or eating, hands and faces still manage to get sticky.

15) Take a few small toys with you on your visit. If you have to wait on lines or just kill time, these can provide entertainment, distraction or exercise.

Six months to two years:

- Enjoy a parade

These provide marching, music, bright colors, and a crowd of smiling faces to entertain your child. By calling the non-emergency members of police and fire departments in your area, you may, during spring, summer and fall, be able to locate a parade per month or more!

- Go biking/sledding

When you need a few groceries or need to return a library book, go by bicycle (or sled, in winter). A simple errand can double as exercise and sightseeing when the family travels together.

- Visit the shore or pool

Even if your child is too young to be trusted in shallow water, sitting with him by the water's edge with a filled bucket, paintbrush, cup and spoon can be refreshing and fun.

- Stroll through town

A brisk stroller ride down Main Street offers lots to look at and comment upon. Parents and children can window shop, people-watch, stop for an ice cream, and explore such things as parking meters, awnings, traffic lights and interesting signs.

- Visit a farm

Small children often find their first look at real animals and farm equipment quite exciting. For those who don't live in a rural area, ask your local nursery school or kindergarten whether any farms exist within a reasonable distance of your home.

• Explore an educational toy store

Stores which specialize in educational toys are becoming quite common and can be fun to visit. An attractive feature shared by most is the "try-out area."

Two to four years:

• Plan a picnic

It doesn't have to be elaborate, nor must it take place in a designated picnic area. Gather together a blanket, sandwiches, fruit and something to drink and you'll have the makings of a fine picnic no matter where it's held.

A jar of bubbles and an inflatable beach ball can provide needed recreation. Or, if the weather is bad and you're picnicking in your den, substitute scissors and paper to make paper dolls and snowflakes!

• Visit an "Open House"

Many children's gymnastics and crafts programs sponsor open houses at the start of each term to encourage registration. Though you may not plan to sign up, you and your children can take advantage of an hour of playtime which offers novel activities and a chance to mix with other youngsters.

• Take a train ride

You need not travel far. The process of purchasing a ticket, waiting at the platform, boarding and ultimately speeding past the rest of the world makes for an unforgettable adventure.

• Visit an airport

The noise, bustling crowds, shops, escalators and roaring planes make airline terminals exciting places to visit.

• Explore the library

Many libraries offer story times and craft activities for very young children. Even if yours does not, a tour of its various sections and some time spent "reading" in the children's room can provide an hour's diversion.

• Visit a harbor

Watching boats or ships dock and depart can be exciting for families who live within a reasonable drive of a harbor. There's a lot to be learned from studying each vessel, observing the loading/unloading process and, when possible, actually peeking inside a boat.

Four to six years:

• Travel to a fishing pier

If you live near the water, enjoy the sun, sand, and sea. The family can either fish or just watch others at work. Children often find the process interesting, and in their excitement, don't even realize that they're learning the vocabulary of the sport: bait, tackle, casting, etc.

• Go camping

If conventional campgrounds are too far away, put up a tent in your yard or on your porch! A blanket over a clothesline will do. Much of the fun in such a trip is in the planning, and your children can help make lists, pack and set up camp.

• Visit a team practice

By four, many children are beginning to show an interest in sports. Watching a high school or college team practice gives another dimension to athletics, for the child can see for himself the equipment, coaching staff, drills and hard work that are required in order to succeed.

• Watch a sporting event

If you don't have access to professional or college sports, your local high school will serve just as well. There are cheering crowds, uniforms, a scoreboard and often a band to make this outing an exciting one.

• Tour a college campus

Pack a lunch and take a drive to the nearest campus. There will often be scenery to enjoy, shops to explore, dormitories, a stadium, theatre, library and classroom buildings to admire on your walk.

• Take a ferry ride

If ferry service is offered anywhere in your area, your family might enjoy a ride. The destination isn't important. Children find the loading and unloading of cars (not to mention a ride on the top deck) very exciting.

Barbara Albers Hill "retired" after eight years as a Special Education teacher in order to raise her two sons, ages 4 and 1. She writes on parenting topics from her home on Long Island.

The Back Page

More resources for interracial families

In response to the article about interracial and interethnic children in the May **Growing Parent**, reader Patricia M. Edwards tells us there are support groups for interracial families across the country.

For the name and address of the group closest to you, write:

The Interracial Family Circle ("IFC")
P. O. Box 53290
Washington, D. C. 20009

Another resource is the Interracial Family Alliance (IFA). The Alliance:

- Offers information and support to families with members of different races.
- Refers families to local groups or community resources that offer support groups and recreational and educational activities.
- Sponsors programs that teach children to deal with racism.
- Publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Communique,* which offers solutions to problems such as helping to develop self-esteem in biracial children.

Write to:
The Interracial Family Alliance (IFA)
P. O. Box 16248
Houston, TX 77222
713-454-5018

Battery precautions

Check the batteries in smoke detectors every month.

Also, take care when disposing of the small, round batteries that go in some watches and other small equipment. They are easily swallowed by small children.

'Garage door game' proves fatal to 32 children since 1982

Safety experts are again warning parents to prohibit children from playing games with automatic garage door openers. Two more deaths involving a nine-year-old girl and a ten-year-old boy were reported recently in Minnesota, in addition to the 32 deaths since 1982 to children under 12.

Reconstructing the accident scenario, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said children activate the garage door opener, then run out of the garage in an effort to beat the door before it closes.

Deaths occur when the descending door strikes the child and pins him or her to the ground. Even garage doors equipped with an automatic reverse mechanism have been involved in fatalities.

CPSC urged parents to keep remote control devices locked in the accessory compartment of the car to prevent access by children. Wall-mounted switches which activate doors should be moved far out of reach of young children.

Homeowners should also refer to the owner's manual for instructions on checking the automatic reverse feature on the doors. CPSC said homeowners may want to adjust the opener's sensitivity switch so that the door reverses under the least possible pressure.

The American Baby TV Show

On CBN Cable Network

Mondays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT
Fridays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT

Research Briefs

Excerpts from child development research

Parents' education values more critical than family structure

Parents who value education and intellectual activity tend to raise children who do well at school whether they are bringing up their offspring alone, in tandem with their original mate, or with a step-parent.

Family structure accounts at most for seven percent of the variance in 13-year-olds' academic performance and school behavior, researchers conclude in the *Journal of Educational Psychology.*

Even when they took the child's gender and the level of conflict in the household into consideration along with family structure, they found that parents' attitudes toward education remained a pivotal factor in the way pupils worked and acted in school.

The study of 219 eighth graders from predominantly white middle-class homes showed that those from two-parent nuclear families earned grades five to seven percent higher than classmates living with a custodial mother or in a household with a stepfather. They were also absent and late less.

Still, the combined influence of gender, family structure and family peace or conflict accounted for only 17 percent of the differences in the children's school grades. Gender's influence was clear in only one area: more boys than girls were sent for detention.

In this study, family conflict seemed to have no significant impact on either academic work or school behavior.

And contrary to expectations, the influence of non-custodial fathers who continued to remain active in their kids' lives was minimal.

These researchers feel that the poor academic work of some children whose fathers are absent probably can't be explained by "lack of paternal availability, lack of opportunity to identify with a 'masculine' problem-solving approach or anxiety over losing an attachment figure."

Growing Child Research Review
Vol. 6, No. 8

Who gets punished when siblings fight?

The kids are at it again, yelling, kicking, punching and pushing each other. Most mothers ultimately step in to stop the mayhem—and unwittingly set the stage for the next fracas.

Interviews with 292 children in fourth through seventh grades and their parents revealed that as mediators, mothers tend to perpetuate rather than discourage fighting.

The problem is that parents generally support the younger, weaker combatant and punish the older, more powerful sibling. The dependable pleasure of watching an older sibling get punished makes the younger child even more willing to engage in combat the next time.

Richard B. Felson and Natalie J. Russo, the SUNY-Albany sociologists who conducted the study, found that parents came down hardest on boys who fight with their sisters.

Most physical violence took place between siblings of the same sex, however, and it was clear that scraps between sisters were as rough and frequent as the fights between brothers.

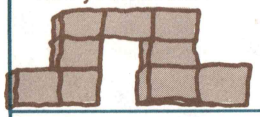
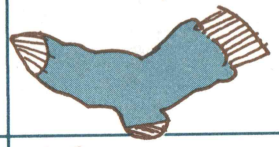
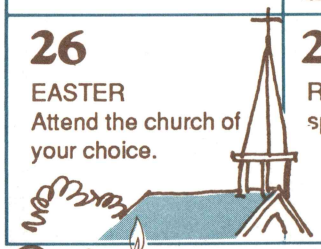
The researchers had theorized that kids would have fewer fights if mothers resisted the impulse to rush in as judge and umpire. The study statistics on this point weren't significant, although they did favor the hypothesis.

What's the smartest thing for a parent to do when a battle erupts and escalates? Felson and Russo advise mothers to punish the older sibling privately, out of the younger child's sight and hearing, if the situation merits such action.

Growing Child Research Review
Vol. 6, No. 9

These brief reports are presented to add to readers' general knowledge of research being done in the child development field. Inclusion of an item does not imply that Growing Child recommends or endorses a particular practice, theory, or finding.

Fun things to do in March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 It's March! How many letters are in this word?	**2** Play follow the leader.	**3** Give Youngster a massage with baby lotion.	**4** Mom and Dad's night out. Youngster can spend the night with a friend.
5 What can you build with your blocks? 	**6** Practice throwing a crumpled piece of paper in a wastebasket.	**7** Make a new friend.	**8** Hang a large mirror on the wall at *Youngster's* level.	**9** Sort socks by color. 	**10** Read a story *about* bedtime before going to bed.	**11** Make an obstacle course out of boxes, pillows and furniture.
12 Hang an old sheet on the wall and let Youngster paint away!	**13** Oldest and youngest sing a song for the rest of the family.	**14** Styrofoam balls are great bathtub toys.	**15** Re-create a show you've seen with your own puppets.	**16** Make green jello. Talk about each step.	**17** ST. PATRICK'S DAY Wear green today.	**18** Put some rice in a small box and tape it shut-it's a rattle or a rhythm instrument.
19 PALM SUNDAY. What does "palm" refer to?	**20** Read a new nursery rhyme.	**21** First day of spring! What does this mean?	**22** Draw circles-big, small, color them different colors.	**23** Draw a great big rainbow on a paper sack.	**24** GOOD FRIDAY.	**25** Color Easter Eggs.
26 EASTER Attend the church of your choice. 	**27** Read a book about spring.	**28** Hand exercises: Open, shut them- open, shut them...	**29** Count the numbers on a clock.	**30** Sit on the floor and roll a ball back and forth to each other.	**31** Clap hands above your head, below your knees, behind your...	

EDPRESS

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Growing Parent®

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How to teach children to be thankful in today's world

By Michelle Mahan

We all learn how to say 'thank you,' but it is learning to be thankful that makes us appreciate our circumstances and abilities.

With all the commercialization facing children today, finding ways to be appreciative is very important.

We can step outdoors with a child and notice things together—the sun of a new day, the scents from the garden, the bluebird passing overhead.

Moments such as these describe things we can be thankful for which don't cost but a penny of time, won't be advertised, but become fond memories. And memories help give meaning to the lesson of appreciation.

Following are suggestions and ideas for enhancing some of the most common things to be thankful for.

Toys, toys, toys

How does a parent get a child to appreciate what he already has?

Remembering who gave a toy or a gift to the child gives an opportunity to appreciate the giver.

Christine, mother of a three-year-old, reminds her daughter of who gave her the baby blanket she plays with by saying, "Remember who gave that pretty blanket to you?"

She then goes on to tell about the friend of the family who made the special trip when she was born to deliver the hand-made blanket.

Communication such as this gives more meaning to a play object.

Things also need their own place to be put away. A child learns that no matter how much or how little he has there is a spot for everything.

Some things should be brought out only at certain times. One mother of two small children brings out special toys when she can watch or guide carefully, and she believes this brings a caring attitude.

Explaining the reasons why toys have places of their own says that care is necessary for children's things as well as for adult things.

"At our house we make presents for each other year round," says Sandi, a young "full-time" mother. "They bring me toys wrapped in paper they have colored."

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And she reciprocates, "Sometimes I just put a sandwich bag of chips, a marking pen and a few pieces of paper in a grocery bag. It delights them, and we get a feeling that whatever it is, it's great!"

Thank you cards have always been something I enjoyed making because I frequently heard how much they were enjoyed. My children like doing it too. And it gives parent and child a moment to reflect on the whys and whos of gift giving.

Photos make great covers for homemade cards. Getting their interest is easy. Try, "Wasn't that nice of Aunt Selma to send you this fire engine, shall we make a special card to say thank you...maybe we could draw a picture of it and color it together." It becomes a joyful experience when a child wants to give for these reasons, and appreciates what has been given to him.

Caring for the basics

Food. A child in the garden, taught to pick a ripe tomato or two, wash them, watch an adult peel them, cut them and then make spaghetti sauce from them, has not only learned something about appreciating where our food comes from, but the fact that he or she has been a part of process.

It's a parent's enthusiasm about the care of the basics that helps a child understand and get excited about how things work.

Shopping at the grocery store can be a daily experience of appreciating, especially if the family is on a tight budget.

Working it out to the penny can be a real challenge, and with an active crew in the cart, talking to them about the needs at home helps their perspective.

At home, conservation can be encouraged. Do this by saving half a sandwich and eating it when the child is hungry again, making the juice last by drinking water or milk in between, utilizing raw materials for baking and cooking rather than using box mixes.

What's important is that there is communication with the small child about why we buy what we do, how it is used, and where it comes from—its value. This awareness helps plant the seed for appreciation of food.

Clothes. "This is the shirt I picked out at the store," my four-year-old-son said to some of friends who came to visit.

A child's sense of pride in what he or she wears will carry on through the years. It's not how much he has, or even if it is brand new, what's important is that he has learned that it belongs to him and it should be cared for.

Allowing a child to help in the process of choosing clothes, washing and putting them away, teaching about warm clothes on cold days, cool clothes on warm days, gives an understanding to him that goes beyond what he looks like, even though he may know this as important too.

The self. In caring for ourselves, parents must take steady steps to give a child reasons for cleaning and brushing their teeth, their hair, caring for wounds, and developing good toilet habits.

The good tasting children's vitamins can be used every day to remind our children that we care for ourselves by doing good things—and proceeding to talk about what the good things are.

Seeing our family members as they are

Many times the parent who works all day comes home to feel forgotten and neglected. It may take some extra time to take a child "where I go to work to see what I do," but it will help a child appreciate a parent's efforts. And statements like, "The work I do here helps so we can live where we do and...eat ice cream cones!", are an obvious reminder and aids in their understanding.

Aside from the nuclear family, distant and extended family members can also be appreciated. Learning how we are connected by family is fascinating to most children. Stories about grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, even brothers and sisters take on great meaning to a child who hears them enough to remember them.

There are many other ways to appreciate all of our family members. It is in remembering them frequently in our conversations, and sharing time with them as much as possible that help a child in his or her memories of each individual member.

Taking your child by the hand for a brief walk with all your attention on the experience can mean so much in helping your child appreciate what you want him or her to. Whether a child can enjoy each day of the year and be thankful for whatever comes his or her way depends on the way he or she has been taught to experience each day.

Developing the habit of appreciating the things in one's life can bring strength and encouragement in the face of obstacles.

Many successful people have been know to say, "We didn't have much but we had love."

What they are saying in most cases is that they learned how to appreciate their own circumstances and abilities, and that if there isn't a bed of roses then daisies will do just fine.

Michelle Mahan is a free-lance writer, mother of two, currently involved in researching and writing about the importance of developing good habits at an early age.

For busy days, try this: "Watching is helping!"

By Marjorie Flathers

From the time my three children were toddlers, I tried to include them as often as I could in household chores and in learning to take care of their own needs.

Also, as each new baby entered the family, I taught the older ones to help by letting them sprinkle a bit of baby powder at diaper changing time or fold tiny clothes.

By kindergarten age, they were able to dress themselves, remembered to put toys and games away, and could even make their own beds. In this way, I felt confident I was encouraging their development.

Sometimes, though, I had a big task to finish in a short time, such as preparing the house for a holiday get-together, making cookies for a local bake sale, or putting the finishing touches on a gift I'd been making.

It just wasn't convenient for me to guide little hands through these tasks, yet I didn't want them to feel shut out.

One of these times occurred when I was especially harried as I prepared food for a big family pot-luck.

My two oldest were 4 1/2 and 3 at the time, and they were anxious to help. I was increasingly frustrated by their determination to join in, so off the top of my head, I said, "Both of you stand over there and watch me very carefully because watching is helping." They were satisfied for the moment, and I got my work done quickly and efficiently.

Later, however, I felt a little guilty about brushing them off with such ease. But as I thought more about the lightly-given response, I began to see that there was greater truth in this reply than I had realized.

It was a fact that my children had helped me by quietly watching and staying out of the way and that my main goal had been to do the tasks without interruption.

But I remembered that I had not completely neglected their chance to learn something different. I had named the ingredients I was adding to the various mixtures as I went along and discussed the steps needed to create chocolate chip cookies, meat loaf, and three-bean salad.

I had also answered their questions about what the dishes would be used for and who would be eating them.

So, it seemed as if this bright idea had worked pretty well after all. In an unusual way, my youngsters had helped me complete everything I had to do, I had given them new ideas, and they felt they were a big part of the upcoming celebration.

After that incident, I used this plan a number of times again, and as the children grew up, "watching is helping" became a family joke that has lasted to this day.

Here are a few points to remember if you try this method.

1. First, don't over-use this strategy. Even tiny tots will catch on quickly if you resort to this phrase too often. Save it for the exceptional times when you are actually unable to guide them through the learning process.

2. Don't use an angry or impatient tone when saying "watching is helping." Say it as if you really believe it yourself, and **do** believe it, because, as I found out, your children really are helping you to get a certain job done as easily as possible.

3. Help your children feel they are a part of what is going on by talking with them as you work, explaining the procedures in simple terms.

If you're cooking, baking, or cleaning in preparation for an important event, tell them about the celebration, what foods you are making and the ingredients they contain, and who will be eating these "goodies."

If you work at home or bring work home from your place of business, you can point out the importance of your work and why you need to do it by yourself.

As they watch you, your youngsters will come to a new appreciation of the duties you have when you're not caring for them. These specific suggestions can be adapted to almost any parent and child circumstances.

4. Continue to use everyday situations, whenever possible and practical, as teaching and learning times.

Not long ago I discovered that my simple idea had stood the test of time when my daughter, Gail, who is now in her 20's, was visiting friends out of state. She told me that as she was packing to return home, her friends' little girl, Kelly, who is four, wanted to help her pack.

But Kelly seemed to be taking clothes out of the suitcase faster than Gail was putting them in. Finally, as time grew shorter, Gail repeated our familiar family slogan to her. She said Kelly was very happy the rest of the day, and when her mom came home from work, she couldn't wait to tell her about all the help she had been to Gail because, "Watching is helping!"

Marjorie Flathers is a free-lance writer who lives in San Bernardino, CA, and writes on subjects of interest to women and families. She has been married 25 years and is the mother of three children.

Adoption is another way of becoming a family

By Maureen McCauley Evans

When my husband and I began telling friends and family that we were adopting a child, reactions ranged from awkward to sentimental to supportive to downright rude.

People often don't know how to react when you say you're adopting. Here are some suggestions for receiving what is truly wonderful news.

Share the happiness

The best response to an impending adoption is the same as that to a much wanted pregnancy: what joy!

Once the parents make their news public, friends and family can plan baby showers, share advice, and offer to babysit after the baby arrives.

I loved talking about wallpaper for the nursery, reading books about babies, looking through catalogues of toys and equipment. I was grateful when a friend approached me about having a baby shower: it made me feel like I really was going to be a mother, that the dream was coming true.

Whatever the circumstances that bring about an adoption, you can be sure that the decision to adopt has not been made lightly.

Anyone deciding to adopt must wrestle with issues such as being able to love a child not born to her, being willing to raise a child from another country or of another race, and being willing to handle all the trials and tribulations of child rearing plus adoption issues. Having made the decision, the prospective parents have reached a sense of peace.

That's why comments like "Have you tried everything to have one of your own?" are so hurtful. When we decided to adopt, we believed that the child placed with us would be our own in a very real sense.

After the baby or child arrives, the comment "Now you'll probably get pregnant and have your own" can be equally painful.

Sometimes the heartache of infertility still lingers, and you'll remind the couple of all they've gone through trying to become a family. Friends and family can be most supportive by saying "What great news! You'll be wonderful parents," or "Another baby in the family: I can't wait."

Further, when you know someone is waiting to hear about her child, don't constantly ask "Any news?"

No matter how well-intentioned, the question is grating, because the prospective parents are reminded of their wait and the typical lack of news until the very last minute.

"Believe me," I used to think, "If I had any news, I'd tell you. In the meantime, stop making me say that there's no news about the child I can't wait to bring home."

Many times prospective parents do not know when their child will arrive, and typically will wait for months, sometimes more than a year. Don't feel hurt if you don't learn about the plans to adopt until just before or even after the child arrives.

Things can go wrong: birth mothers change their minds, babies are born with medical problems, legal questions entangle the process. The prospective adoptive parents are doing what is best for their happiness at becoming a family.

What not to say

As perhaps expectant mothers might be a little sensitive about comments on their weight, adoptive parents might seem a little sensitive about attitudes on adoption. It is not a means of saving the world, it is not a sentimental gesture, it is not a horrendous risk.

I'm saddened, for example, when people get sentimental about my son: "How nice you adopted him," as if we were contributing to world harmony.

I'm bothered by the implication that, by adopting, we're taking on an enormous risk, as if biological parents don't share those risks.

I'm angered by assumptions that adopted children will automatically have more problems than non-adopted children.

Sensitivity is also called for in using adoption terms. When I discuss adoption, I don't say that my son's birth mother gave him up for adoption; I say that she made a plan for him.

I'm pleased when others say "birth mother" rather than "real mother," because that implies I am the "unreal mother." The real mother is the one who raises and nurtures the child. I am Sean's adoptive mother, but, most importantly, I'm "Mom."

In cases where an adopted child is not of the same race as the parents, those outside the family should respect the family's privacy.

My friend Linda's son was born in South America: he's a sturdy little boy with black hair, dark eyes, and brown skin.

She's fair-skinned, with light brown, wavy hair. Often complete strangers will say to her "Is he adopted?" as if it were any of their business.

What's worse, she says, sometimes strangers will ask, "Is he yours?" You better believe he is.

Supporting an adoption means accepting the child as the true family member that he is.

There is never any need, in a casual introduction for example, to say, "This is Jane's adopted son, Tommy."

In a family that includes adopted and birth children, you should not ask the parents, "Which one is your own?"

Neither should there be any need to refer to an adopted child as "special" or comment on how lucky he is to be a part of the family. All children should be considered special, and all of us are lucky to be part of a family.

Helping children understand adoption

One other important way to support an adoption is to be sure your own biological children, if they have adopted friends, aren't scared or confused about adoption.

Adoption is a positive means for bringing a child to a loving home he might not otherwise have and for making a family where there was not one before.

Your children should understand that adoptive parents don't buy their babies: they pay for the costs of adoption (legal bills, counseling services, perhaps physicians' fees).

They should understand that the child's adoptive parents are his real, forever parents: a child's birth parents cannot "take him back."

Current thinking on adoption suggests that a child should not remember a time when he didn't know he was adopted. In other words, the fact of his adoption is part of his life, as is his brown hair, his musical ability, and his dislike of carrots. It's important that your children understand and accept this about an adopted friend.

At the same time, information about why the child was placed for adoption and about his birth parents is for the child and his family alone. Your children should respect their friend's privacy as much as possible.

Of course, if an adopted child wants to talk about his background with you or your children, be willing to listen and respond without judging. In any case, if you are comfortable talking about adoption, if you see it as simply another way of becoming a family, your children will feel comfortable about it too.

Accept and love

The best way friends and family can support an adoption is to respect the decision to adopt and to love the child that enters their lives. Adoptive parents experience all the deep love and tremendous frustrations of parenting; they aren't necessarily any better or worse at it than anybody else.

Adopted children may have to grapple with some additional issues in growing up, but they deserve the same love and acceptance as any child.

Family and friends should be aware that one out of six couples is infertile, and more and more people may be considering adoption. Adopting is not easy today, it is often time-consuming and emotionally exhausting, but when a child is adopted, he has come home to his family.

Maureen McCauley Evans is a free-lance writer who teaches Technical Writing at the University of Maryland. She lives with her husband and son in Cheverly, Maryland.

When you're waiting for your child

Sometimes the hardest part in adoption is waiting for your child.

Here are a few suggestions to make the wait more bearable.

First, keep a journal to record your thoughts, frustrations, and dreams.

Second, if you plan to send announcements of your baby's arrival, see if you can order the envelopes in advance. Putting addresses and stamps on makes the process seem more real.

Finally, start a craft project for the child or the nursery. My son arrived before I finished my cross-stitch animals, but working on it while waiting made me feel more like a mother-to-be!

The paperwork part of adoption

People who adopt must go through a home study, a process of being interviewed by social workers, filing medical and legal information, asking for letters of recommendation, and additional administrative tasks before approval to have a child placed with them.

My husband and I had to write our autobiographies, submit copies of our filed taxes, and fill out forms on the physical and emotional conditions we were comfortable and uncomfortable with. It made us think very seriously about the responsibilities of parenting. In fact, we often wondered what the world would be like if all prospective parents had to go through such a procedure.

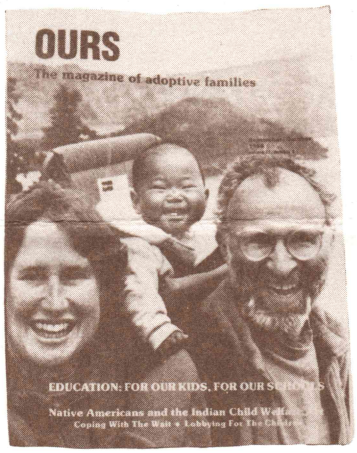
M. M. E.

The Back Page

Magazine deals with all aspects of adoption

OURS is the nation's largest adoptive family magazine. This 22-year-old publication provides information, entertainment, and encouragement to adoptive family members, adoption workers, educators, and others involved in or considering adoption.

The magazine deals with all aspects of adoption—practical, psychological, social, medical and legal. Articles in the magazine have covered education and adopted children, developing cultural pride in international or different-race adopted children, legislation and health issues, parenting children with physical or mental handicaps, adjustment and development issues, single adoptive parenting, the semantics of adoption, and adoption procedures.



Adoptive parents write many of the magazine's stories, including personal narratives about their experiences in adopting, waiting for their children to arrive, and parenting them once they have come home.

Family members also offer support and guidance and information for exchanging letters through regular departments devoted exclusively to networking.

The magazine also features waiting children, book reviews, parenting resource materials listings, and an annual index.

OURS has also won the Parents Choice Gold Award for parenting magazines.

The magazine is published by **OURS, Inc.**, a national non-profit adoptive family organization. Membership includes the bi-monthly magazine.

A free copy of the November/December issue is available, in addition to a free adoption information packet with a "Highlight" issue by writing or calling **OURS, Inc.**, 3307 Hwy. 100 N., #203, Minneapolis, MN 55422; (612) 535-4829.

Is there a thumbsucker in your household?

If your child sucks a thumb, that may not be all bad, depending on the child's age.

For some infants and toddlers, sucking the thumb is soothing and reassuring. Infants are able to ease themselves back to sleep. One report shows toddlers who sucked their thumbs were more adventuresome and that their sucking behavior was associated with self-reliance and self-confidence.

But the habit can be extremely worrisome for parents. By age five when permanent teeth begin to come in, concerns about the impact of sucking on facial appearance become more serious.

The July, 1987 issue of **Growing Parent** featured an article, "Kicking the thumb-sucking habit" (copies are available). This issue also describes a very helpful books for parents.

David Decides About Thumbsucking, by Susan M. Heitler, Ph.D. has two parts. The first part is a story written for children five years old and older (it will work with children slightly younger). The second section is a parent's guide that answers questions most often asked about thumbsucking and describes techniques that give parents a place to begin in resolving the problem.

This excellent resource is available from: Reading Matters, Box 300309, Denver, CO 80203. Cost: $9.95, plus $2.00 shipping and handling.

Research Briefs

Excerpts from child development research

Misbehavior blamed on sibling rivalry may be age-appropriate

We've all seen children who seemed to be having a problem controlling their behavior when a new brother or sister was added to the family.

The older children alternately cling and disobey, explode into tantrums — and their parents assume that they are reacting to the new baby. Maybe, but not necessarily.

A University of Michigan study shows that negative behavior can occur without the baby. Sibling rivalry gets blamed for a lot of behavior that's normal and even age-appropriate.

Two groups similar

When researchers compared the way 20 children acted one month after a newborn joined the family with the behavior of 20 "only" children still enjoying their parents' full attention, the researchers didn't find all that much difference.

- Both groups of kids preferred mother dolls to baby dolls, given the choice, and were rough on baby dolls.
- Both groups defied their parents, whined and erupted in tantrums with about equal ferocity.
- Seventeen mothers with new babies reported that siblings were behaving negatively, but so did 11 mothers of only children.
- Some of the sibs actually became less clingy after the arrival of the baby.

"Generally speaking, the older the firstborns were, the more independent they became." The older girls seemed to become more dependent on their mothers for help with specific tasks but this passed.

Boys became much less dependent. In fact, 40 percent of the sibs and 60 percent of the only children showed positive behavior changes during the two month study.

The siblings did differ from onlies in some aspects of doll play in the experimental situation. They were more concerned with family relationships and were nearly three times more likely to have the parent doll lavish affection on the child doll. The boys were much more involved in acting out parent-child relationships with the dolls than were only-child boys.

Distress before and after

Some children's behavior signalled their upset even before the birth. "If a child is distressed by the arrival of a new sibling, the distress often will show up in the last month of pregnancy" says Lorraine Nadelman, who headed the study.

Why so early? "Probably because the mother is less likely to attend to and play with the child, less likely to treat the child as a baby and more likely to be restrictive." The child reacts to the changes. Also, the household atmosphere reflects tensions as parents, relatives and friends anticipate the event.

A fascinating finding: the siblings whose mothers had most thoroughly prepared them for the new baby's coming showed the most negative behavior of all when the infant finally arrived.

The researchers speculate that the heavy-duty preparation may have aroused anxiety in the child, or the mother's own anxiety may have been communicated to the youngster.

Growing Child Research Review
Vol. 6, No. 12

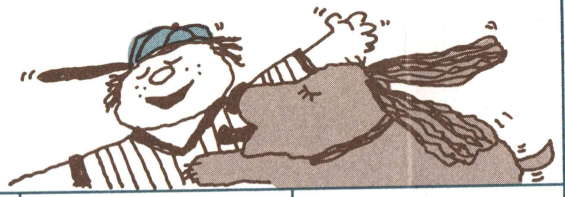
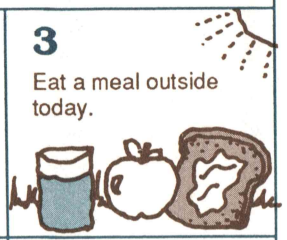
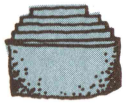
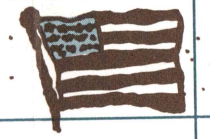
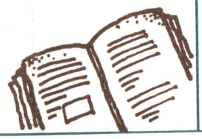
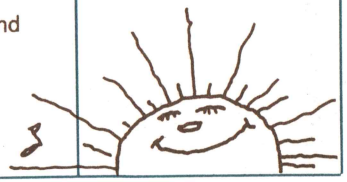
The American Baby TV Show

On CBN Cable Network

Mondays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT
Fridays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT

These brief reports are presented to add to readers' general knowledge of research being done in the child development field. Inclusion of an item does not imply that Growing Child recommends or endorses a particular practice, theory, or finding.

Fun things to do in June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Growing Child A Division of Dunn & Hargitt, Inc. For children 6 months to 6 years				**1** What words rhyme with June?	**2** Find the number "2" on this page.	**3** Eat a meal outside today. 
4 Walk barefoot outside. What does it feel like? 	**5** Use empty shoe boxes to make a train.	**6** Stack some plastic bowls. 	**7** Go outside and look at your shadow. Move around--what happens to it?	**8** Play peek-a-boo with a scarf.	**9** Listen to a wind chime.	**10** Take a friend to the park.
11 Draw on the sidewalk with chalk.	**12** Find something purple outside of your house.	**13** Where are your ears?	**14** FLAG DAY What colors are in our flag? 	**15** Make gelatin cubes for a cool snack.	**16** Listen to the birds in the morning.	**17** Create a special gift for Dad.
18 FATHER'S DAY Tell Dad why you love him. XOXO XO 	**19** Try a new vegetable.	**20** Which hand is your right? Your left?	**21** Wow! First day of summer!	**22** Look for circles in your house.	**23** Go to the library and find a book about summer. 	**24** Find some water in which to play/wade/swim.
25 Look for birds' nests in the trees.	**26** Play with a toy that "connects" together in some way.	**27** Play hide and seek with a toy.	**28** Read a poem out loud. 	**29** What state do you live in?	**30** Take a ride around the block in your wagon.	

EDPRESS

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Growing Parent®

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What's inside a child's mind?

Going under bridges and other cutting offenses

By Mary P. Townsend

Do you really know what your child is telling you, or why he has acted in a certain way?

I remember vividly how I thought and felt as a child, sometimes to my dismay but always to my amazement.

This came to mind lately when my two young friends were arguing over the proper punishment for their five-year-old son who had cut his own hair.

I asked them if they had ever cut their hair when they were little. Neither had. But I had.

I had long golden "Shirley Temple" curls. One day I picked up the scissors and cut one of the curls right off. For no reason.

I looked at the curl in my hand and loved feeling how soft it was. Nothing more, nothing less. Simple.

I didn't feel bad about the way I looked because I never thought of it. My parents were horrified and I was a bewildered five-year-old, just as my friends' son was.

That, as a matter of fact, was my second "cutting" offense.

I remember the first time very well. My mother was indignant when she found my little four-year-old fingers cutting up the brand new sheet on my bed with her curved cuticle scissors.

"What on earth are you doing?" she asked in a sharp tone.

"Making pretty shapes," I answered, holding up the sheet for her to admire.

I was fascinated both by the scissors that weren't straight and the crisp feel of the new sheet. I couldn't imagine why she wasn't as excited about my new find as I was.

Fortunately I had a mother who listened to my words and could see the marvel as I did. She mended the sheet and told me to ask her for scraps if I wanted to do any more cutting.

I never cut another sheet, but I also never lost my curiosity about what my hands could create.

The earlier lesson about cutting with scissors did not apply to hair, only to sheets. You can see that, can't you?

I think if we take the time to **ask** our children what they were thinking when they do something **we** think of as wrong, we might be very surprised at their answer.

Our punishments and/or instructions may then more appropriately fit the "crime." I think we too often credit the child with our own ability to think and reason, and with our own adult motives.

Four-year-old Christie was helping me weed my garden one day. My goal was to get rid of the unsightly weeds along the edge of the driveway near the garden. Christie decided to work in the "big garden." Confiscating my kneeling pad, trowel and hand

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cultivator, she started pulling weeds out of the middle garden.

Using the only remaining tool in my basket, the weed digger, I attacked the dandelions around the telephone pole at the end of the driveway.

"Mary," Christie said as she sat down on the sidewalk next to me, "I think there is something we need to talk about."

"What's that, Christie?" I asked as I squatted down next to her.

"Now, I came over here to help you with your garden and I think it is only fair that you should help me now with mine. You see, my garden here is too big." (She gestured to the garden between the driveways.)

I sat for a moment in reflection. All of this was "my" garden. She was asking for help in the garden she had chosen to be **hers.**

It made sense to her that I should help in her garden. I did. And mused again on the strange thinking of children. And the adult way I had initially responded to her statement.

Christie was learning the sharing principle. I decided we would have to share the kneeling pad, too.

I thought back again to when I was somewhere around her age, and I could still hear the ugly voice of a neighbor lady as she screamed at me, "What a bad, bad girl you are. How could you run down Mrs. Mullen like that?"

Her voice rained fists down on me. I was scared.

"I was just trying to go under the bridge," I whimpered. I looked over at the lady lying on the sidewalk with my tricycle flopped over on its side near her. I was confused because I could still see her as I had a few minutes before at the other end of the street.

She was walking toward me and I could see a Λ as the sunlight shone through her dress. (This is my adult understanding, as a child I saw only the Λ.) It looked to me like I could ride right under that bridge with no trouble at all if I got a good running start. Which I did.

I was as surprised at landing on the sidewalk as Mrs. Mullen was.

The adults saw intentional hurting of another human being.

I saw a bridge. Besides, I liked eighty-two year old Mrs. Mullen very much, I wouldn't think of hurting her. For whatever reason, Mrs. Mullen wasn't mad at me. I think she understood bridges better than anyone else.

Although I am childless, I have an abundance of children to listen to and play with. I live in a small town on the corner of two short intersecting streets where there are about thirty children.

They think they can only play "stone school" on my steps because I taught them the game.

Because I have strict rules about no fighting or kicking, my porch is their "safe place", too. Sometimes we sit and talk, sometimes we sing, and I am always intrigued with how they think.

In my years as a nurse practitioner, my contact with children was usually under stressful conditions, for them and me.

There were the usual immunization shots, throat cultures, and looking into already hurting ears, but I learned that a big hug and "I love you" after some painful procedure usually brought them running back to me with open arms on the next visit. Kids are wonderful!

Although my anecdotes are about young children, I think my idea that we attribute our knowledge to children should include everyone when we are trying to communicate.

Not everyone knows what I know (and I have been accused of falsely assuming this), nor do I know what others do.

The children in my area constantly play in the middle of the street, and I am forever telling the little ones to get back on the sidewalk. They ignore me.

One day, my two three-year old friends, John and John-John, rushed over to ask me where I'd been all day.

When I told them, "at work", they wanted to know what I did. I said, "I'm a nurse."

"Then you can fix up dead kids," John said as he grinned up at me.

I was horrified. I realized that they didn't know what "dead" meant. "No, John, I can't fix up dead kids. I can only fix living ones, and that's why I tell you to stay out of the street."

"Oh."

They still don't know what dead is, I'm still attributing children with my adult knowledge, and I know better because I remember being a child.

Mary P. Townsend is a registered nurse with a Bachelor of Science in Human Services. She is also a free-lance writer and lives in Hilton, NY.

Safety on the road means more than car seats

By Martha B. Simon

Car safety begins with an approved car seat, but does not end with its use.

Here are some tips to aid you in making car trips safer for you and your children.

• Start a routine.

From the beginning put your child in the car seat **every time**. If he cries or fusses, say or sing the same thing each time. Try "We're going for a ride; time to buckle in."

I have a friend whose baby would yell loudly every time she put him in the car seat.

He then would continue with a steady stream of crying until he fell asleep or she reached her destination. Eventually, she did not want to go out even for short errands.

Then she started a little routine of singing about where they were going and why, ignoring (as much as possible) his indignant cries.

Now her singing distracts her baby so he often smiles as she lowers him into the seat.

• Always buckle your seatbelt and insist other riders do the same.

Children accept being restrained themselves if they realize that this is a part of automobile riding for everyone.

Before I start the car I say, "Is everyone buckled in?" That way if a friend isn't wearing her seatbelt, I'm giving her the opportunity to put it on without feeling awkward.

• Make it clear that riding in the car is not a game.

This does not mean you shouldn't try to make rides as interesting and fun as possible for your kids, but they need to understand that your attention must be on the road, not them.

You should discourage your kids, in a no-nonsense manner, from talking loudly, moving around or throwing toys.

Don't try to amuse your baby or child by grabbing for various toys and handing them to him instead of paying attention to the road. Your child should be able to amuse himself or reach his toys unassisted. If he seems inconsolable, pull over, but only at a safe place, such as a rest stop.

• Don't try to drive and give your baby a bottle.

If you are going to be on the road long enough that you are going to need to feed your baby, the stop will do you both good. Babies can cough or choke slightly while eating and if you are on the highway with one hand on the steering wheel, this can be a dangerous situation.

• Learn to block out crying.

If you get upset, your chances of having an accident are greatly increased.

If it is apparent that your baby's cries are from crankiness or boredom, and there is no place to stop, sing to the radio or talk to your baby over the cries. Try not to get upset.

• Never leave your child unattended in the car.

It is true that getting a child in and out of a car seat can be cumbersome, but don't leave your child in the car even if you are "just running in." Bring him along even if you can see your car from inside the store.

• Be extra careful.

Be aware that you are more distracted with a child in the car.

Pay even more attention to what you are doing. After some hectic shopping and getting a fussy baby in her car seat, it's easy to forget to look behind you before pulling out of the parking space.

• Many accidents happen close to home.

Make sure everyone is settled in before you charge off. Having to lean over and adjust blankets or hats while driving is dangerous.

On long distance trips, avoid the temptation to speed up once you are near your destination. You are more tired at the end of a long trip and if anything should slow down a bit.

• Check your car.

Have your car tuned up.

Get your brakes, tires (don't forget the spare) and battery checked regularly.

Always make sure you have enough gas, oil and windshield wiper fluid.

If you don't already know how, get someone to show you how to change a flat tire.

Store a first aid kit, blanket, flashlight, water and flares in your trunk.

• Always use a car seat.

No safety tips can replace the invaluable protection a car seat offers your child. Never take your child out of his car seat while the car is running.

If your husband is driving and your baby is screaming, don't take him out "just for a minute." Besides sending your child mixed signals on the use of a car seat, this is dangerous and against the law.

Never let a friend's child who should be in a car seat ride without one in your car because you are "just going up the street." Again, this is both dangerous and illegal. Make sure you have installed and are using your car seat correctly.

Martha B. Simon is a free-lance writer who lives in Virginia Beach, Virginia with her husband and son.

Travel with children can go easier with treats

By Janice W. Heilmann

When my parents packed their battered suitcases, we knew it was time to point the '55 Ford west to Nebraska for our annual summer pilgrimage.

It was a journey that took us from our suburban Maryland home through seven states, at least fifty-five gas station restrooms, and every comic book stand between Washington, D. C. and Indiana.

My father would hold the car at a comfortable cruising speed while my mother commandeered back seat operations—the arduous task of taming my sister and me as we rolled around, drew imaginary battle lines with our fingers and counted the hairs on the back of my father's neck.

My mother invented an effective system of crowd control which used secret presents stuffed into old shopping bags.

At regular intervals, her hand would snake down into the crumpled bag and emerge with a wrapped package upon which we would gleefully pounce. The miles clicked away and the journey, though long, was made shorter by the anticipation of the next present.

The days of forty-eight hour road trips are over for me, and my returns home are by plane. But traveling with kids still presents the same kinds of challenges.

Here are some tips, learned through trial and error, which have worked for me and my two young sons.

• Travel at a time of day that is reasonable.

This means if your child always naps between 11 and 1:30 and is miserable without sleep, arrange your flight schedule to accommodate him/her.

• Check your children's ears. The time to discover an ear infection is not when the captain has turned off the no smoking sign, but several days before.

Cabin pressure can make a

What airlines do for kids

American—	Child meals available, request six hours in advance of flight. Coloring books and crayons on board. Flight attendants will take children into cockpit prior to flight if time permits.
Delta—	Baby, toddler and child meals available, request when reservations are made. *Fantastic Flyer* magazine available to any child which includes stories, games and puzzles. Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck visors given to kid flyers. Bassinets available in bulkhead seats on international flights.
Eastern—	Child meal available, comes in fun box. Request when making reservation. Playing cards on board. A-300 airplane has larger lavatory to change diapers on long-haul flights. Provides assistance at airports to single parent travelers on both domestic and international flights, request when making reservation.
Northwest—	Baby and child meals available, request eight hours in advance. Infant kit on board includes evaporated milk, diapers and baby meal for emergency use.
TWA—	Child meal available, request at least two weeks in advance. Nurseries with cribs and/or changing tables at every airport. Bassinets on every plane, request when making reservation or when checking in. Pull-down changing tables will be available on all international flights begining spring 1989.
United—	Infant and child meals available, request a day in advance. Special services at Washington-Dulles, O'Hare, Denver and San Francisco have games, books and TV for any passenger (good for long layovers). Bassinets available, request when making reservation.
U. S. Air—	Child meal available, request when making reservation. Flight attendants may have coloring books or hand puppets, but not part of standard flight kit.

J. W. H.

child's ears uncomfortable even if they are not infected.

• Ask if the airline provides special meals. Many airlines have infant and children's menus.

Infant meals will include strained meats and vegetables and milk; child's meals can include hamburgers, spaghetti circles, chicken nuggets or hot dogs. Airlines require that a special meal request be made in advance so do that when making your reservation, and then remind them of your request when you check in.

• Select a window seat. The clouds around the plane and the fleeting ground below are fascinating to a child.

Although the aisle seat provides easier access to the bathroom, it also provides easier access to the aisle which is where your child will want to go, especially if he is new to the wonderful world of movement.

If you're traveling with a very young infant, ask, when making your reservation, if bassinets are available in the bulkhead seats.

Otherwise, select a non-bulkhead seat which will allow you to store your carry-on bag in front of you during take-off and landing.

• Pack small children in a front or back-pack. A packed child is infinitely easier to handle than one slung on your hip.

Airport security personnel will help you remove the pack and will hand-carry it around the security machine.

Invest in a metal luggage cart with rubber wheels, too. My five-year old son, who would never dream of lugging my lumpy, overstuffed bag onto the plane, now proudly pulls the cart behind him.

• Turn your carry-on bag into a commissary. Food and promises of food are wonderful incentives to good behavior.

Pack snacks that take a little longer to eat as well as those which are special. If your child has been pleading with you to buy him green and purple gummy worms with three heads and you have flatly refused, buy them for your plane trip and present them with a flourish. Better yet, wrap them in paper and treat them as a real prize.

Bring plenty of juice, but avoid dark colored ones since they are invariably dribbled.

• Pack a few new toys and books. Wrap them in wrapping paper with lots of tape. Little cars or small slate boards and chalk are easy for a child to use in his seat. Several **new** soft-covered books will keep a child's interest longer than ones to which he has grown accustomed.

• Point out the features of the plane. Even very small children are fascinated by the lights above each seat, the air nozzle whooshing above their heads and window shades that slide up and down.

If there is time before the flight takes off, arrange to say hello to the captain. Most kids are awestruck by people in uniform.

• Ask for a car seat when renting a car. If you are traveling in grandma and grandpa's car, check your own seat through at the luggage counter and hope for the best.

Janice W. Heilmann is a freelance writer and mother. She lives with her husband and two sons in Charlotte, Vermont.

Car seats are a matter of life or death

By Maxine Kopel

Police and paramedics rushed to the crash scene. The car wasn't too badly mangled, considering it slammed into a tree.

A sigh of relief was heard through the crowd of bystanders and rescue workers as a baby was removed unhurt from the car. One rescue worker said the infant's car seat—and his parents' seat belts—probably saved their lives.

Each year, more than 50,000 children under the age of five are hurt in car accidents; 80 percent of these injuries occur to the head and face, sometimes causing permanent mental and physical disabilities. Car accidents are, without a doubt, the number one preventable killer of children.

Simple solution

Preventable is a key word here. Because serious injuries can be avoided with one simple practice—buckling up.

All 50 states have child protection laws requiring child safety seats and belts. The first safety standards were established in 1971. Ten years later they were upgraded, requiring all seats to pass actual crash tests.

Despite the federal law, a survey by the National Traffic Safety Administration showed that proper car seat usage is only about 56 percent.

Two major problems

The two major problems were incorrect installation of the seats and the way the child was placed in it.

These mistakes can be deadly.

Continued on next page

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When a car hits an object, such as a tree, a concrete wall, or another car, it begins to crash and to slow down. But the unbelted passengers continue to move forward at the same speed the car was traveling.

Passengers don't stop

Within 1/10 of a second, the car stops. But the unbelted riders just keep going until they slam into the dashboard or windshield or fly out of the car.

In a 30 mph crash, a ten pound baby can be slammed forward with the force of 300 pounds. A 125-pound adult can be thrown forward with the force of nearly four thousand pounds. Any child sitting on an adult's lap can be crushed between the adult and the dashboard.

Car seats hold children away from the dashboard and allow them to "ride down" the crash with the car. They also distribute the force of the crash more evenly over small, fragile bodies and absorb some of the impact. And, of course, car seats prevent helpless children from being thrown out of the car.

Car seats prevent injury

In a 1987 report written by the U. S. Department of Commerce, National Technical Information Service (NTIS), which studied more than 2000 auto accidents involving children under the age of four, 95.6 percent of the children in properly used car seats had no injuries. Most of the children who were injured were hit by flying objects, such as glass.

We don't need expensive surveys and elaborate tests to tell us that a child tightly buckled in a car seat is less likely to smash into the windshield than a child standing between the seats.

It's common sense.

So why are so many drivers—mostly parents—so reluctant to spend the few extra seconds safely securing tiny passengers into their seats?

Myths abound

One of the most common excuses is the I'm-a-good-driver myth. The problem is that even the best drivers can't protect themselves—or their unbuckled children—from negligent drivers.

Another myth is that being thrown free is better than being trapped in a car, especially if there is a risk of fire or submersion.

Being thrown is 25 times more dangerous; a passenger can whip through a windshield, scrape the ground, and be crushed by his own car.

Less than 1/2 of one percent of all crashes involve burning or drowning. When it does happen, the chances of escaping if knocked unconscious are about nil. But a belted passenger can quickly undo a seat belt and rescue children.

Many drivers don't bother buckling children for short trips. Yet, 80 percent of the deaths and serious injuries are in cars traveling less than 40 mph and 75 percent were less than 25 miles from home.

Holding doesn't help

Finally one of the biggest myths is that a tightly-held child on a lap is safe.

This is dead wrong. In fact, lap-held children in the front center have the deadliest seat in the car. Even if the adult is wearing a seat belt, the child can be torn from the parent's arms by the violent forces of the crash.

Using a car seat can prevent tragedies. But an improperly used car seat can also be dangerous.

In the NTIS study, one-third of the infants faced the wrong direction; 71 percent of the parents knew this but thought their children were old enough to face forward instead of backwards.

What they probably didn't know was that facing the wrong way can cause the child to be thrown from the seat.

Twenty-eight percent of the seat belts were improperly fastened around the seats. In this case, the seat can break and throw the child out the car.

The most common failure—85 percent—was not using a tether when required. Eighty percent of the parents were aware of the tether but thought it was too much trouble.

One way to make it easier is to be careful when buying seats.

- First, consider the child's comfort. Make sure the seat will fit into the car and the seat belts are long enough to secure it.
- Make sure the buckle isn't too bulky to slide through the car seat's slots.
- Buy a seat with a simple design that is easy to use.
- Most importantly, read the instructions before buying it so there aren't any surprises when putting your child in it at home later.

Proper use

Once your child is in it, make sure he or she faces the right way. The instructions will explain which way this is. The rear middle is the safest place in the car.

And, of course, once you've done everything right, buckle the child tightly. Loose straps that fall to the side provide little protection.

The family that slammed into the tree on that drizzly morning was lucky. Chances are, those parents don't think it's too much trouble to buckle their baby or themselves.

They have their lives to prove it.

Maxine Kopel is a social worker and freelance writer who lives with her husband and two children in Amherst, New York.

Research Briefs

Excerpts from child development research

Joint custody no cure-all for children of divorce

The chance to live with each divorced parent in turn may sound like the next best thing to living with both. In practice, the arrangement often does not work out for either children or adults, even when the parents' dealings with each other are amiable and both chose joint custody.

Among the other findings of three studies conducted by Judith Wallerstein, executive director of the Center for the Family in Transition, Corte Madera, Cal., and colleagues:

- Children whose parents agreed on joint custody were no better off psychologically, two years after the divorce, than youngsters with less harmonious parents. One-third of the 101 families in one study had voluntarily selected joint custody. The offspring of these middle-class, well-educated suburbanites were no healthier emotionally than other kids adjusting to family breakup.
- Current theory holds that joint custody is especially beneficial to boys because it satisfies their yearning for close regular contact with their fathers. The contact had no appreciable effect on the boys in the 30-plus "amicable" cases in the first study.
- The second study showed that joint custody was harder on children than sole custody when the parents had bitter, hostile feelings for each other.

Dr. Wallerstein reports that little girls in particular suffered in such arrangements, for "they have no protection anywhere. No longer part of her mother's protective orbit, the little girl loses her value and identity as her mother's psychological extension and close ally and becomes instead either the fantasy rival [or] the fantasy traitor — tainted by contact with the enemy — or both."

Janet Johnston, a sociologist at Stanford University, headed this second project.

The third study indicates that joint custody does not necessarily ease parents' adjustment to the divorce. Psychologist William Coysh reported that fathers did not become better parents or retain more self-esteem when they shared full-time care of their children — although these outcomes are often used as arguments in favor of joint custody.

Dr. Wallerstein, a specialist on divorce's impact on children, now feels that the child's relationship with each parent, rather than the custody arrangement, determines how well the youngster comes through the breakup.

Growing Child Research Review
Vol. 7, No. 1

More info on strep throats

"Strep throats are virtually unheard of in the first year of life," according to the *Harvard Medical School Health Letter.*

Parents intent on stopping the spread of strep infections should also know that:

- Strep is not likely to be present in the youngster who has common cold symptoms along with a sore throat.
- The small child with a strep infection frequently has a stomachache in addition to the sore throat.

Throat cultures pinpoint strep but the traditional technique necessitates a wait of 24 to 48 hours.

Ask the doctor about a new quick way to confirm a strep throat. Results of the office test are available in an hour or less.

Growing Child Research Review
Vol. 7, No. 2

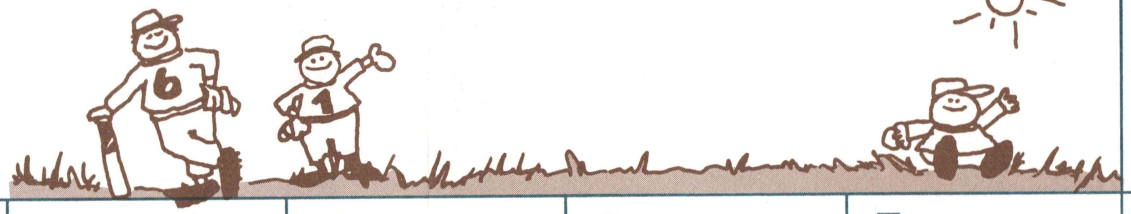
These brief reports are presented to add to readers' general knowledge of research being done in the child development field. Inclusion of an item does not imply that Growing Child recommends or endorses a particular practice, theory, or finding.

The American Baby TV Show

On CBN Cable Network

Mondays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT
Fridays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT

Fun things to do in July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Growing Child A Division of Dunn & Hargitt, Inc. For children 6 months to 6 years						**1** Canada Day Which way is north? This is where our neighbors in Canada live.
2 Eat dinner outside in the evening.	**3** Draw a picture using red, white, and blue crayons.	**4** INDEPENDENCE DAY Sing Happy Birthday to the U.S.A.	**5** What is the temperature today?	**6** Beatrix Potter's Birthday. Celebrate by reading Peter Rabbit.	**7** Who fixed dinner? Tell them "Thank you!"	**8** A small wading pool is an inexpensive way to have fun. Adults please supervise young ones.
9 Get up early to watch the sun rise.	**10** Put together a puzzle.	**11** Give someone a compliment.	**12** Where is your nose? What can you do with it?	**13** Look for butterflies outside.	**14** Touch the bottoms of your feet. Have you looked at them recently?	**15** Invite a friend over for a picnic.
16 Look at yourself in the mirror when you have shampoo on your head.	**17** What color are peas?	**18** Play with an inflatable beach ball.	**19** Play peek-a-boo behind doors, furniture, etc.	**20** Anniversary of the first moon walk. Look at the moon tonight. What shape is it?	**21** Look for lightning bugs (fireflies) at night.	**22** Rent a children's video you've never seen before.
23 Count the closets in your house. / **30** Enjoy a movie matinee.	**24** Play follow the leader. / **31** Do something backwards.	**25** Wash out empty milk cartons and use them to build castles.	**26** Is there a Toy Library in your community?	**27** Velcro ™ is an inexpensive put together-take apart toy.	**28** What do the clouds look like today?	**29** Give Mom and Dad an "Eskimo kiss."

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EDPRESS

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People say the darndest things

By Barbara Albers Hill

Three months ago, my husband and I learned that we are expecting our third child.

Rather than share the news with the world as soon as my pregnancy passed the 10-week mark, we chose to remain quiet a bit longer.

When I examined our motives for doing so, I realized that, in this day of 1.2 children per couple, I was expecting the worst in terms of friends' and family's reactions to our announcement.

Our motivation for keeping quiet was further prompted by the feeling that the closer our second child (a fairly aggressive and jealous little guy) was to 24 months when people learned of his sibling-to-be, the less chance there would be of anyone using his tender age and emotional neediness as proof that my husband and I are making a mistake.

We realize, of course, that things are going to be quite chaotic in our house in a few months, but feel up to the task of evenly distributing our attentions and affections. The problem is, not everyone may agree.

For some reason, many people feel the need to offer unsolicited and often not-too-helpful opinions each time they hear an announcement heralding an important and usually irreversible decision.

Impending parenthood, in particular, is often viewed vicariously, so regardless of whether this will be the first child or the fifth, and no matter whether the newsbearer's face is morose or glowing with joy, some recipients react only according to how he or she would feel in those circumstances.

The worst response I ever heard was offered to a friend eager to share the news of a very-much-planned third baby when her others were ages 1 1/2 and 3 1/2: "Oh, my. Have you thought about an abortion?"

Running a close second is the comment made by an elderly aunt upon hearing of a second pregnancy somewhat close on the heels of the first: "You two are as bad as a couple of rabbits!"

More often, the remarks are actually more nosy than ruthless, but it seems to me that anything other than a smile, congratulations, and possibly a polite inquiry on the state of the mother's health shows bad taste.

Yet most of us have heard and perhaps even been guilty of comments like, "Was this planned?" "Are you trying for a girl/boy this time?" "How long did it take you to get pregnant?" "Will you be having any testing done?" or even "Are you going to have your tubes tied after this one?"

Just for curiosity's sake, we'd probably like to have this information about every pregnancy we hear of, but when you think about it, it's most certainly none of our business.

If the expectant parents feel comfortable sharing personal

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Activities for six months to six years.

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details, these will be revealed voluntarily. If not, we'll just have to wonder.

There are a few possible reasons why a friend or family member may respond in a less-than-positive manner to the news of a third pregnancy. Though these reasons don't automatically give that person the right to voice an unasked opinion, understanding them may lessen our own hurt, amusement or anger.

First, many people have strong feelings about anyone having more than two children.

They may feel a couple has the right only to replace themselves in this already-crowded world. They may have tried parenthood themselves and, finding infancy or toddlerhood both exhausting and restrictive, stopped with relief after baby #1 or #2. Or they may truly be concerned about the expectant parents' ability to cope with the emotional or financial demands of a family of five.

Someone else may currently be dealing with a parenthood-related crisis (infertility, an unsupportive spouse, a problem with a child, working-parent difficulties, money woes) and simply not be able to stop himself from voicing the indirect wish to spare you similar problems.

Then, too, subconscious jealousy might be a factor if the remark comes from a woman whose children have left babyhood, from a man who's a bit insecure in his masculinity or from parents who might like another child themselves but have spouses who disagree.

Finally, there are some people whose self-esteem depends heavily on comparisons with those around them and who can't help needing to know every thought, word and deed that preceded and followed this baby's conception.

These people may not allow much room for individuality when forming an opinion of a change in someone's circumstances.

As my husband and I slowly began to share the news of our third child with friends and relatives, we kept a quiet mental tally of the types of reactions.

The most common reaction was one of utter surprise, usually followed by something like "Aren't you the two who weren't going to have **any**?" (an understandable response since we were once quite vocal about wanting to live carefree lives.)

Of course, we heard many remarks such as "You're nuts!" "You two are really going to have your hands full now!" and "You'll never get back to work at this rate!" but, since we'd resolved to remain positive in the face of all reactions, I chose to accept them as mostly in jest.

Surprisingly, we faced not a single question about our ages, amniocentesis or intentions regarding future birth control.

Only once or twice were we asked whether we were hoping or "trying" or a particular sex, and since our family currently consists of two little boys, this surprised us as well.

In the end, the vast majority of people responded to our announcement with hugs, kisses, excitement and the warm congratulations which expectant parents hope for.

And since we've spread word of our impending third-time parenthood, friends and family haven't missed an opportunity to inquire about my health or offer everything from maternity clothes to advice and babysitting help.

There are a few snappy, effective yet not-too-rude comebacks which expectant parents can use in the face of overly curious or negative reactions to the announcement of a pregnancy. If you are prepared, your own response can leave you feeling that your excitement, expectations and self-esteem are still intact, whatever the remark.

Here are some samples:

A polite "Why do you want to know?" should quickly nip any nosy question in the bud.

"Isn't it great news?" can serve as a generic and noncommittal response to anything from inquiries about your sanity to questions about the timing or planning of the birth.

A somewhat amazed "Of course!" serves as a positive, if possibly less-than-truthful answer to queries about your planning of or happiness about the baby, maybe even leaving the questioner a bit shame-faced for having asked.

Quickly assuring questioners that you'd be delighted with another child of the sex you already have frees you from speculation that you were disappointed with what you eventually got.

A mildly amused "Is that possible?" puts to rest inquiries both about any unhappiness at the prospect of another baby and about "going for" a certain sex.

Finally, a brief laugh and some unrelated comment of your own will firmly draw the conversation away from remarks which you consider biting or from questions which are too personal for your taste, while sparing any real confrontation.

Barbara Albers Hill is a former teacher who lives on Long Island with her husband and two sons, ages 4 and 1. She writes frequently on parenting topics.

Where are the experts at three in the morning?

By Steven Lewis

Pregnant? Nursing? Weaning? Thumb sucking? Toilet training? What is that rash on the baby's belly? Are you considering a job outside the home? Having another baby? Adopting?

Confused? Of course.

Parenting is, without a doubt, the most complex and important job anyone will ever do, and to do it effectively, it sometimes seems you must have the wisdom of Solomon and the devotion of Mother Theresa. Modern parents must be aware of issues and options that their own parents never imagined.

The good news is that there is an immense network of information to help you make any decision regarding your children. Expert advice comes from doctors, nurses, lawyers, magazines, financial consultants, psychologists, books, aunts and uncles, siblings, cousins, newsletters, teachers, students, the woman at the bakery, the divorced father in the park.

There comes a point, though, where you can get too much of a good thing. At first glance all that good advice—expert and otherwise—seems helpful, but in reality it can easily add to your confusion.

A major issue in the information explosion is that the advice-givers simply do not agree on anything. Even a common problem will produce contradictory advice.

A more serious problem is that the unlimited access to expert opinion is turning parents away from common sense self-reliance. Ultimately, even after the most exhaustive search of professional opinion on any given condition, you must return to where you started: yourself. There is nowhere else to go, and you must be prepared to decide on the best methods of taking care of your young.

Since parents will always be the final decision makers about the health and safety of their children, they must learn to see themselves as the experts they are. No one knows your child as well as you—and that will never change.

As modern parents we must be educated, because at three in the morning, where are all those experts?

Where are they when your baby has the croup?

Where are they when your child is having a seizure?

Where are they when she has fallen down the stairs?

Where are they when he has a nightmare?

People have always had an instinct for nurturing and self care. Our great grandparents, many of whom were illiterate and who did not have access to experts on baby and child care, did a fine job of raising their children. They would have clearly benefitted from modern medicine and contemporary psychology, but they did what they could under the circumstances and did it in a caring, intelligent and generally effective way.

Experts should have a valued place in the modern home—easily accessible on the bookshelves, magazine racks, in the telephone directory—but ultimately, all parents must understand that they are the real experts when it comes to their children. No one knows your children nearly as well as you do. No one bears the responsibility that you do.

Confused?

Trust yourself. There are a lot of experts out there to back you up if and when you really need them.

Steven Lewis works as a teacher and free-lance writer in upstate New York. He has been married 20 years and has seven children.

Tips for teaching children positive communication

By Anita Remignanti

Children learn a lot from the way their parents talk. When parents talk in a happy and positive way, their children learn to feel content and good about themselves. Positive talk also helps children develop self-confidence.

Parents teach language to their children in a natural way as they go about their day. Every activity, even preparing a meal or changing a bicycle tire, is an opportunity for parents to make positive conversation about what they are doing.

Positive language is clear and direct as well as courteous and friendly.

It is patient even when a parent feels frustrated and stressed. Honesty and fairness are part of healthy communication.

There are many pitfalls on the road to positive communication and it is easy to make mistakes without realizing it.

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Hate

Many people use the word "hate" so often that they forget it is a strong word.

Someone might say, "I hate chocolate ice cream," when they really mean, "I don't like chocolate ice cream."

Parents should try to avoid the word hate when a less strong word would be better. Consider the statement, "I hate it when you leave your toys on the stairs." A more accurate comment is, "It annoys me when you leave your toys on the stairs."

Negative words

There are many unsavory words that attract the attention of young children, such as stupid, idiot, dummy and various "bathroom" words.

Most young children will not use these words—or swear words— often if they do not hear their parents or other family members using them.

Many children know impolite words because they have heard them, but they do not use them for two reasons.

The first is because they have been told not to use them and the second is because they do not hear the words regularly used by their parents.

It is easy to use a negative word when we feel discouraged or frustrated, but there are some good reasons to avoid this. Insulting words make people feel bad and the use of unflattering words reflects a lack of high standards and values.

For example, "That stupid, dumb door needs some oil" could become, "That squeaky, squealing door needs some oil."

Threats

After a child has done something wrong, parents discipline them. Setting limits, providing natural consequences, time-out and if-then statements are some disciplinary measures used by parents. These ways to discipline are effective if they are used properly.

Threats are usually unplanned, harsh statements made to frighten and coerce a child into good behavior. There is often a physical aspect to a threat such as, "I will spank you if you don't stop whining."

A planned disciplinary measure is not threatening because it is expected and understood. For example, "If you whine, I will not be able to talk to you now."

If this plan has been explained to the child many times, she has learned that whining does not get attention. In this way, a child is not frightened into behaving. She can make a choice.

When children or adults feel controlled by threats, they tend to resent the people using them.

Hopelessness

The way we talk can reflect a sense of hopelessness and defeat. Young children are learning and exploring so many new things, and we want to encourage this by using hopeful words.

These words create a sense of hopelessness in children: "I've had it with you. You'll never learn to help. You might as well quit now. I'm through trying to teach you to be good. All the other kids listen to their parents, why can't you?"

Children can make adults feel frustrated and it is understandable when some of these phrases slip out, but with careful thought parents can understand the problem with this communication and work to avoid it.

Parents have to tell their children how they are progressing. It is important to choose hopeful words even if more progress is needed.

For example, a mother has told her four-year-old to use a tissue instead of her sleeve many times. A hopeful way to remind her is, "I've told you to use a tissue and you are not using it again. You can remember if you try."

Commands

For the most part, adults usually speak to each other in a courteous way. If an adult does command another adult, then it is usually because he feels superior in some way.

When we speak to children we often forget to use courteous words and we command them as though they were inferiors.

For example, a busy father might say, "Pick up all those toys." instead of "Would you pick up those toys please?"

Children need to be shown respect with our talk so that they develop self-respect. Children who feel of equal value to other people will speak to others with courtesy and respect.

Parents are often under pressure to meet deadlines and get things done. It is easy to command children when in a rush, but children pay the price for this.

Instead, their cooperation can be solicited with courteous requests. If they do not then cooperate, then consequences can follow.

For instance, a parent who is late says to her five-year-old, "Please put your jacket on quickly, then, when we are driving, I will play our guessing game with you."

Positive communication gives us the chance to show our caring and respect for children. It gives us the chance to teach them courteous and creative language as well.

What we say and how we say it reflects our attitudes about children and they pick up on this.

Anita Remignanti has a doctorate in psychology and has worked for a number of years in private practice with children and their families. She and her husband have two sons and a daughter, and live in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

It doesn't take much time to have the time of your life

By Carol Shenold

June Cleaver on "Leave It To Beaver" cleaned house while wearing a dress, high heels, and a string of pearls.

Margaret Anderson on "Father Knows Best" spoke softly, smiled and made cookies.

They started a guilt trip spanning two generations. My generation grew up watching these perfect mothers. Now, when most families need two incomes to survive, our children watch the re-runs, and we feel guilty about the time we spend, or don't spend with them.

The guilt trip

One spring when my son, Jeff, was about four, I decided it was time to decorate Easter eggs together. That afternoon when I got home, after eight hours in a busy obstetrics department, we got ready.

Jeff stood on a chair at the kitchen counter while I arranged cups of colors. "Quality time," I thought.

Then Jeff dropped two eggs and crushed the shells. "Well, maybe not picture-perfect, but a snap-shot for the scrap book."

When red and green dye shot across the counter top, mixed into brown and splashed onto my white shoes, I was ready to throw everything, including my son, into the trash, send out for pizza and cry.

My best intentions for quality time with Jeff ended in guilt and disappointment.

"I make it up to the kids on my days off," says Cherie, a newspaper editor and mother of two.

"It's hard sometimes because they have their own ideas of things to do. When they enjoy our activities like the zoo, or flying kites, then I think I've been a good mother. When they're involved with other things, or tired or crabby, then I worry that they won't have any wonderful memories of their childhood."

Perfection, say goodbye

Then "Supermom" arrived on the scene. You couldn't simply work and raise the children the best you could, you had to do it all, be the best, the most.

It's not realistic or even practical to expect this kind of perfection. The most important kind of quality time for children has more to do with being than doing.

Be available, not intrusive. Don't rush home from work, frantic to do something with your child.

Instead, come home, sit down, listen, observe. Don't feel you have to use the time. Simply enjoy the time.

Quality time for you

When we divide ourselves between work, children, home, and husband, most of us find time a rare commodity.

We can't take away from work, never from the children, and we owe some attention to our husbands. So we cut out ourselves.

Take an hour, even half an hour of uninterrupted time for you.

Read a book, soak in a tub, take a nap while your partner watches the children.

Then you can plan the same thing for your child, an hour of uninterrupted time with you. Lock the door, take the phone off the hook. When your child sees that you are there, you won't be distracted, he will be secure enough to play independently, without feeling the need to perform or "act out" in order to keep your attention.

Slow down, stop and watch

Lynn, a school aide and the mother of three complains, "I only have weekends off, most of the stores are closed Sunday, so I take the kids and rush around town to do errands. The baby goes to sleep in the stroller, my three-year-old hits his little sister and we all arrive home too exhausted and grouchy to enjoy any time together."

Finally, out of desperation, Lynn took the children to her mother's one evening and went

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out alone to do some of the errands she usually left for Saturday.

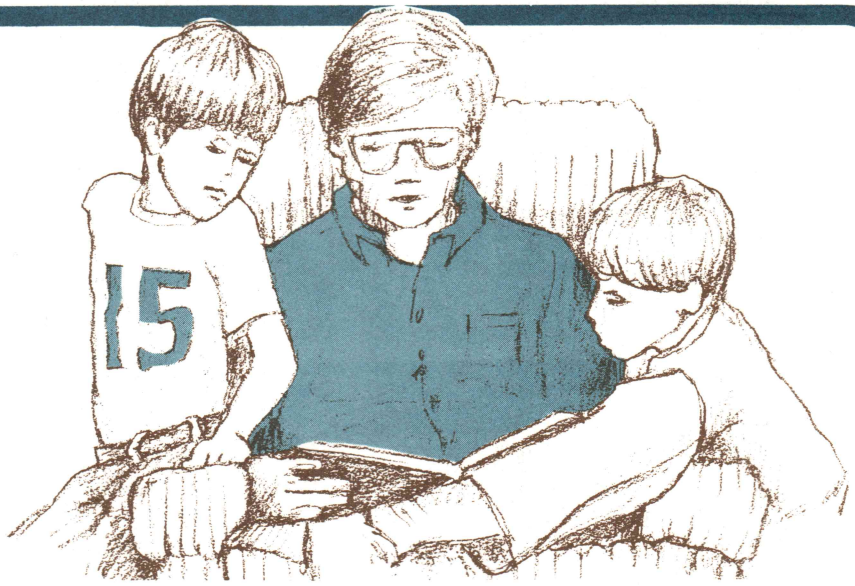
The world didn't come to an end, the children enjoyed the time with their grandparents and the following Saturday was leisurely, with everyone taking time out to look at blades of grass or the way the kitten takes a bath.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't take the kids to the store, show them how meat is cut, or how the man fixes the sewing machine. They learn from everything around them. But they can learn even better, and enjoy it more, if we give them blocks of time where they set the pace.

When my daughter was little, we went to my mother's to spend Christmas. On the ride back home, Christy didn't talk about the presents, or food, or attentive cousins. She said, "That was nice. You never even told me to hurry up and get dressed."

Now that my children are older, they have a hard time breaking the "do" habit. If we are all home together, they want to "do something."

I wish I had told them more about the slow track. The one where you stop and smell the flowers.



Father knows best

We've been focusing mostly on mothers. What about quality time with Dad? Dad is how Mom can grab that hour of quality time for herself. He can watch the children while you take a long hot soak in the tub, or read a book. While he watches, he puts in his relaxed quality time one-on-one with the children.

"We have to put the squelch on other things and make time to do family activities," says Melanie, a registered nurse.

"By the time we finish supper and baths, get clothes ready for the next day, I realize I haven't read Ross the story I promised. It helps when James puts the boys in the tub while I cook supper. He gets a lot of time with the boys when I work other shifts, so it works out. It does get more complicated when his kids, (from a previous marriage), come for the weekend."

Time goes by

You also need quality time as a family. Go to the zoo, a picnic, skating, fly a kite.

When the children have had special time with each of you, they can enjoy a more structured family outing, armed with security, the knowledge that they will still receive undivided attention from you both. These are times when including children from previous marriages can be handled with less stress.

While quality time for yourself and for the children are important, hours for you and your husband as a couple can't be neglected.

You will be a couple long after your children grow up and fly away from home, taking their memories of a secure childhood. If you don't nurture that relationship, you really will have an achingly empty nest.

The next time you sit down to watch June Cleaver or Margaret Anderson, enjoy them for what they are—fairy tales—not role models.

You and your family may not be the Brady Bunch, but you can have the time of your life enjoying each other.

Carol Shenold is a registered nurse with thirty years experience, several years in maternal-child health. She lives in Savoy, Texas, has been married twenty-three years and is the mother of three children.

Tips For Quiet-Together Activities

- Draw pictures of each other.
- Watch a video and talk about it.
- Toss crumpled paper balls in a trash can.
- Listen to sing-along music together.
- Make a clay figure of Daddy.
- Make a block tower.
- Sit outside and watch a pet play or count butterflies.
- Make a tape for grandma.
- Take a walk and carry a sack for pretty rocks.
- Eat an apple as slowly as you can.

C. Y. S.

Dear Growing Child

Readers write to Growing Child

Parents call the shots

In reading the article "Your parents as babysitters," which appeared in the October, 1988 issue of ***Growing Parent****, I almost felt as if the author were giving instructions to a three-year-old from the pages of* ***Growing Child*** *rather than worthwhile advice to mature, intelligent, and responsible parents.*

While most of the points she made in the article were correct enough, I am amazed that anyone would assume [the presence of] such a high degree of immaturity in the adults of our society...if this immaturity really does exist (among that many), then we're really in trouble!

When I look at people like myself or my husband who, before we even chose to marry (and long before we chose to have children), were college educated, lived hundreds or thousands of miles away from our parents, and were employed in responsible, professional positions, I must say (laughingly) that I don't know who she is speaking to, but it is not to us!

I might also add that I find many of the ideas she has expressed or implied about grandparents (i.e., suggesting that they often don't have enough time together with grandchildren or that parents should have complete confidence in the caretaking abilities of grandparents because it is "illogical and unfair of you to expect them to care for and discipline your child exactly the same way you do") to be unacceptable. These are opinions, rather than facts, and must be emphasized as such. I believe they are part of a disturbing trend of thinking and writing that I am beginning to see all too often.

Grandparents are not the "legal guardians" of my children, and neither are they moral or spiritual guardians. I call the shots when it comes to how my children are cared for, disciplined, and raised—not their grandparents or anyone else. And there is little room for flexibility in this area, because the safety of my children is ultimately my responsibility, and ensuring that they are raised exactly as I wish is my own personal privilege. I firmly believe that a large part of the divorces, runaway problems, and other family breakdowns so common today can be attributed to weak and confused adults who have become parents without ever having learned or abided by the simple rule that they themselves are the heads of a household, separate from grandparents and all others, with corresponding rights and responsibilities of their own.

Susan Davie
Albuquerque, NM

Food poisons dog, too

I found Corrie Player's article "Is your family poison proofed?" to be an informative and well-written article, but one sentence greatly distressed me.

She mentioned rotten food as a possible source of poisoning and told of her child being poisoned by old chicken she planned to give to her dog.

As a veterinarian, I am often presented with very surprised clients who thought old food could be given to their pets.

Contrary to popular opinion, dogs do not have stronger stomaches than people do. Old chicken which could poison a child would make a dog just as sick.

So to avoid emergency visits to veterinarians, I suggest not feeding food too rotten for people to eat to pets.

In addition, I'd like to remind readers that human drugs (including aspirin and acetaminophen) should not be given to pets unless directed by a veterinarian. The dosage for people (even by body weight) is often greatly different than dosages for animals.

Jennifer Bouthilet, DVM
Northfield, MN

Shampoo tip

The wonderful woman who cares for my son discovered an ingenuous way to rinse the soap out of his hair without tears.

She holds something interesting (e.g. a rattle) up so he will look up and tilt his head back. Then the cup of water she pours on his head runs down the back of his head and not into his eyes.

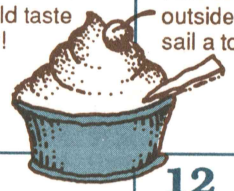
At 13 months he now knows what's happening and very cheerfully cooperates.

I hope this idea makes baths the uniformly enjoyable time for others it now is for us.

Cynthia E. Nethercut
Evanston, IL

"Dear Growing Child" is a forum for our readers. The letters published do not necessarily represent the views of Growing Child. All letters to the editor will be treated as having been submitted for publication. If you do not want your letter published, please specify. Names withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for publication.

Fun things to do in August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Visit a county or state fair.	**2** Friendship Day. Tell a special friend how much he or she means to you.	**3** What color is your toothbrush?	**4** Yum-yum. Frozen yogurt would taste good today! 	**5** Find some water outside in which to sail a toy boat.
6 Ask Mom or Dad to read the comics to you.	**7** Draw a line on the sidewalk and practice jumping over it.	**8** What is your favorite animal? Can you find a picture of it?	**9** Make "ice cubes" out of fruit juice.	**10** Go outside and feel something new and different--sand, dirt, a tree . . .	**11** Sit outside in the evening. What do you see in the sky?	**12** 1 c. milk 1 c. yogurt 1/2 c. fresh fruit. Mix in the blender for a tasty treat!
13 Feel the different textures in fruits and vegetables.	**14** Mail a letter to yourself!	**15** Find something colored red in your house.	**16** Stack some blocks. How high can you stack them before they fall?	**17** Look for birds outside.	**18** Draw on a chalkboard.	**19** Is it hot today? Play with a water hose or sprinkler.
20 Visit an elderly friend.	**21** Paint your toenails. Oooh!	**22** What shape are the boxes on this page?	**23** Talk into a tape recorder. Play it back; what do you sound like?	**24** Talk to someone through a paper towel tube.	**25** Find something in the house shaped like a triangle.	**26** Put some sunglasses on and have your picture taken.
27 Read a new book today.	**28** Find a great big sandbox to play in.	**29** "Walk" your fingers across a table and play "Here comes a bug!"	**30** Listen to a wind chime in the evening.	**31** What colors are your clothes today?	Growing Child A Division of Dunn & Hargitt, Inc. For children 6 months to 6 years	

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A grand way to care

By Linda Brott

With so many women working outside the home and people enjoying longer lives, today's family is often faced with placing a child in a day care center or an aging parent in a nursing home—or both.

Today's parents, part of the "sandwich generation," are caught in the middle, caring for their parents or other aging relatives as well as for their own children. They often must seek some type of professional care for them when the woman works outside the home or a death or divorce leaves a single parent alone to deal with responsibilities.

There is an approach to child and elder care that is rapidly gaining enthusiastic support. Known as an intergenerational program, it merges long-term care for the aging and child care under one roof.

Young and old are united for short periods every weekday, sharing activities ranging from crafts, singing and exercise to picnics, baking and wheelchair rides.

As a result, they soon develop "grandparent/grandchild" relationships that yield far-reaching benefits.

The first such program was started in California in 1976, on the premise that it was natural for children to be exposed to people of all ages as they grew.

The concept has been an overwhelming success, as evidenced by the fact that in 1981 there were only five such programs and today there are over 100.

Why the tremendous interest? What do intergenerational programs offer elders, children, parents and even administrators that had given rise to their popularity?

Renewed life for elders

In her book *"Our Best Years,"* Helen Hayes called for the social sciences to catch up with medicine.

"The miracle of modern medicine prolongs...life so that 'old' does not have to sound like punishment.....(But) they have yet to learn what to do with all these eager survivors..."

Many residents of nursing homes are living simply as survivors.

They are there because they need some level of care that their families cannot provide, yet their lives are far from over.

The result is feelings of rejection, isolation, even guilt. There is mental and physical decay that could be prevented or lessened by involvement with children.

Administrators of such programs have found that interaction with children expands the elders' horizons, gives them a sense of purpose and responsibility, promotes pride and general well being.

The presence of children also relieves the "institutional" flavor of many long-term care facilities.

Examples of marked im-

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provement in elders are numerous.

Many administrators report cases of elders who would not come out of their rooms to socialize until child care centers were incorporated, after which they began making regular visits to teach and play with the children.

One particular elder, who professes to be a genuine cowboy, couldn't find another resident who would listen to his tales of the old west. Now he is a popular storyteller in the child care center, playing his harmonica and passing on his memories of the frontier.

The older generation has much to share, including their personal values of hard work, respect, patriotism, ethics.

This teaching relationship not only gives children an opportunity to learn but gives elders increased self-esteem.

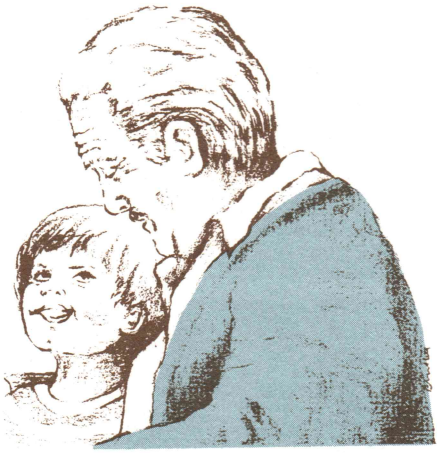
And since learning is a lifelong experience, elders are often finding themselves on the receiving end of awareness as a result of a relationship with a child who sees the world through innocent eyes.

About the only "complaint" administrators have is that they have to work harder to keep the elders happy on weekends, when the children are not present.

At Avon Oaks Nursing Home and Child Care Center in Avon, Ohio, part of the solution has been an "intergenerational rabbit," who spends the weekdays with the children and the weekends with the elders.

But as one administrator said, the staff's efforts to keep elders active and alert are put to shame by the children. "These kids do a better job just doing what kids do. Their life, youth and energy keep everybody stimulated."

That stimulation serves an even greater purpose for elders who have suffered a stroke or the loss of a loved one. Interaction with children gives new focus to older people going through a period of depression, and stroke victims find that "playing" with childrens' toys to regain motor skills is much more than therapy when a child shares his experience.



Many special relationships have developed in dual-care facilities, including a bond between a blind man and a blind boy. Women particularly become almost possessive of their "grandchildren," bragging about them to the other elders and to their families.

Having special relatonships with the children has given these elders renewed interest in life, has made them "eager survivors."

A stable beginning for children

Children involved in intergenerational programs experience love and attention, giving the daily visits to the care center a familial atmosphere.

Rarely do they cry or feel abandoned when a "grandparent" is close at hand. The unhurried ambiance of older people conveys a sense of peace and security to a child.

The elders have time and patience that busy parents may not, and they take an interest in activities that might seem insignificant to others.

And like the elders, children gain a sense of self-esteem from "teaching," be it the art of building a sand castle or making a poster.

The interaction with aging adults helps the children understand that growing old need not be a frightening experience.

"Daily interaction with older people helps children acquire a sensitivity to the realities of aging. They begin to learn something of their own place in life's continuum and to see that human needs are consistent throughout life," says Deborah Cloud of the American Association of Homes For The Aging. "They learn not to be so quick to judge a person merely on the basis of physical abilities or appearances and not to fear those who are different from themselves. These are important lessons for the young children who, at this stage, are forming their own sense of identity and self-worth."

Children readily accept the infirmities and disabilities of the elders and in fact become protective toward their "grandparents." Being exposed to the frailities and occasionally inappropriate behavior of older adults, they learn to be tolerant and respectful.

And they learn about death as a fact of life. Parents are always informed when an elder known to the children passes away, but in most cases the children deal with it in a positive way.

When a beloved "grandparent" passed away recently in an intergenerational home after spending several hours in the child care center, the children remarked that her last day had been a happy one, and they planted a tree in her memory.

Building memories is what childhood is all about, and an intergenerational program can

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provide a key element to a child's early years.

The bear hugs, the pinched cheeks, the plate of cookies—all those things that most of us cherish as memories of our grandparents—are often lost to children today.

Parents are more apt to relocate far away from relatives.

Divorce separates children not only from one parent but from one set of grandparents.

In a nursing home/child care center, children may spend hours a day sharing bear hugs and cookies with a "grandparent."

Peace of mind for families

Parents whose children have been part of an intergenerational program have found ample reasons to applaud it.

The primary reason is their children are receiving more—and more personalized—attention than they would in an independent center.

Parents also take comfort in knowing there is a skilled medical staff on the premises in the event of an illness or injury.

An added benefit to parents has to do with meals.

Since nursing home residents generally have their big meal at midday, and the children are served from the same kitchen, parents know their children have had a balanced, nourishing lunch.

Families of the elders also have added peace of mind when a child care center is incorporated.

"On-site child care draws the community into the nursing home," says Cloud, "(and) frequent visits and close community involvement are linked to high quality nursing care."

Relatives who visit the elders appreciate having a focus for their time together.

More information

To locate the intergenerational facility nearest you, contact your state association for the aging or state health department.

Information is also available from the American College of Health Care Administrators, 8120 Woodmont Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814.

The long-term care center interested in establishing an intergenerational program may purchase a manual from the Foundation for Long Term Care, 194 Washington Ave., Albany, New York 12210, for $14.50.

L. B.

Rather than being limited to the routine questions that bore the family and insult the elder, such as "Do you remember what you had for breakfast?" visits become centered around activities with the children, either in actuality or in discussion.

A staffing solution for nursing homes

Anyone considering long-term care for an elder has to be concerned about an adequate and skilled nursing staff in a facility. Administrators today are struggling with a critical lack of qualified personnel.

"The U. S. is in the midst of a serious national shortage of nurses and other essential health care personnel. On-site child care can make the crucial difference in a home's ability to recruit and retain a skilled, committed staff," Cloud says.

Administrators of homes already employing the concept report that it has been much easier to attract skilled staff because many of the nurses have preschool children themselves and like the idea of having them close by while they work.

Indeed, some nurses enjoy meals with their children during the day or even take time out to nurse an infant. The facilities found that employee morale and camaraderie increased and absenteeism decreased when the child care center was opened.

And the number of community volunteers, teaching crafts and reading stories, increased markedly in mixed homes.

This, in part, explains why so many facilities are turning to the intergenerational concept. And since nursing homes are accustomed to meeting inspection and licensure requirements and usually already have the zoning, space and safety features, it can be much easier for them to start a child care center than for a center to open immediately.

With minimal efforts to "sell" the idea, Avon Oaks found themselves enrolling children the first day, and they haven't had an empty bed in the nursing facility since the program started. There is currently a long waiting list for both nursing and child care.

Everybody wins

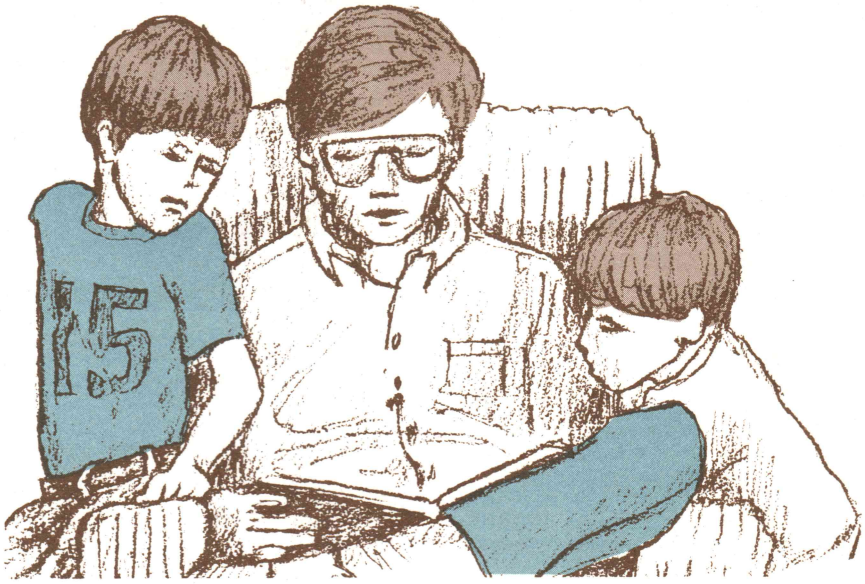
Clearly there are a multitude of advantages to "grandparent/grandchild" relationships in combined nursing home/child care centers.

For aged adults and their families, for children and their parents and for administrators and staff there is great value in permitting the old and the young to exchange ideas, laughter and hugs. It truly is a grand way to care.

Linda Brott is a freelance writer who lives in Scottsdale, Arizona, and writes on lifestyle trends. She also pursues a career in public relations and advertising.

When father stays home

By Jerry Circelli



"Doesn't it ever bother you that your wife makes more money than you do?"

"Well, this is sort of a vacation for you, isn't it?"

"Do you do all the cooking and the cleaning too?"

"Say, I know of a job opening in your field. Interested?"

These questions, to which the answer is "no" in all cases, have been asked of me repeatedly since I quit my job two years ago to become a stay-at-home father.

Friends and relatives often remind me how lucky I am to be married to an understanding wife with a good job.

I don't deny it.

Without the moral and financial support of my wife, Joan, I would never be able to spend so much time with my five-year-old son and nine-year-old daughter.

Joan's success at her job as a mechanical engineer has not only allowed me to share more time with my children, but to pursue my goal of becoming a free-lance writer as well.

Although both my wife and I were determined to make our situation work out, we weren't prepared to face all the problems that came our way.

The hardships we originally envisioned were financial—I quit a $36,000-a-year job—but we worked out a budget that we have lived with for the past two years. The frustration we never expected, however, stemmed from attitudes of resentment by relatives and friends.

I discovered that when a man quits his job to take care of his children, he becomes something of an outcast. People are not as liberal and understanding as I once thought.

When a woman quits her job to spend more time at home with her children, people think she's a good mother; when a man quits for the same reason, people don't quite know what to think. It's acceptable in our society for a woman to stay at home with her children, while her husband works a regular job, but not the other way around. Even in the movie, "Mr. Mom," Jack didn't stay home with the kids by choice—he was fired and he was looking for another job.

I'm sure other fathers who have traded their jobs for full-time parenting have encountered the sometimes innocent, but often times caustic remarks that seem to go along with the territory. They can be demoralizing.

When I became depressed about the way my friends and relatives were viewing my decision, I found a way to cope with it all.

At first I was hurt by the negative comments hurled my way. Then, I became a bit angry. I would have a sharp retort for those who would belittle me with thoughtless questions and comments.

Now, however, I'm secure and seasoned in my position as a stay-at-home father and although I admit the comments still bother me, they don't throw me off course the way they used to.

Perhaps the firmness of my conviction to be a stay-at-home father was reinforced one morning last summer as I pored over the newspaper.

After reading past the seriousness of the national and local news, I flipped to the funnies, but could not resist at least taking a peek at Ann Landers. I met her once when I worked as a copy editor for the Dallas Morning News and have always wished I could break into syndication too.

There in her column was a letter from my father, titled "Where did the years go?"

A forlorn father recalled when his two children were ages five and seven. He said he wished he could have spent more time with them, but was too busy working.

Long weeks and late hours had left him little time for his children, who grew to ages nine and eleven before he knew it. He missed their school plays, but heard from others just how talented they were.

Then, in no time, they were teenagers and he missed his

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daughter's first date and his son's championship basketball game.

Now, his children are in college and his job is less demanding. The problem is, he cannot reclaim the time he lost in being with his children. "I'd give anything to live those years over...But they are gone now, and so is my chance to be a real dad."

The letter left me stunned.

I saw myself in that man. I had missed some precious years in my children's life, but I was thankful that they were still young and I really did have the chance to make up for lost time.

To my wife, I am thankful for that opportunity. Because of her dedication to her job, and ultimately her family, I can help raise the children the way both of us intended.

Before reading the letter, I had been under a barrage of criticism from people who suggested in their myriad ways that I was doing something wrong by staying at home. Then, here was a man who offered a different perspective.

By putting matters back into perspective, I found I could deal with criticism.

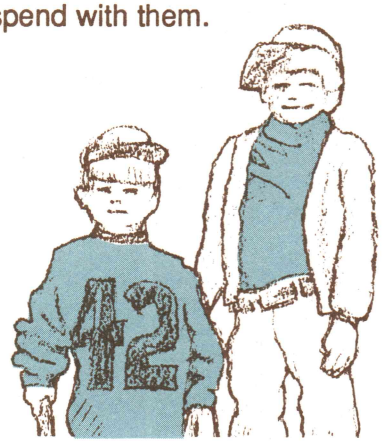
Furthermore, I realized that people really don't expect an answer to many of their insensitive questions, and I don't give any.

I found that people began to accept me and the decision I made when I stopped defending myself to them. When it became apparent to others that I was confident about my abilities in raising my children, they recognized it and afforded me more respect.

At times, I also realized that I was my own worst enemy. When I read about "mommy and me" swim classes, "mother's day out" programs and similar activities, I became frustrated. When I tried to join some of these activities, however, I found that I was warmly welcomed. I realized that when program directors wrote about mommies, they really didn't mean to exclude daddies.

No matter how my friends and relatives react to my choice of staying at home with my children, I have only to look at my family to keep my spirits high.

My wife is more at ease, knowing I am taking care of things on the home front, and my children benefit from the extra time I can spend with them.



Gymnastics, baseball, soccer, swimming lessons, scouting—my children did not have the opportunity to participate in these activities before I left my regular job behind. Now, they can see more of the world around them and I can help them take advantage of the opportunities that exist for enriching their lives.

This is a time in my children's lives when they can explore the world on their own and I can observe from a safe distance. It's a similar tack I take when I bring my children to the zoo. I let them choose the direction they want to go and let their curious minds be their guides, but I'm always a few steps behind to ensure their safety.

I realize there can be no substitute for this experience and opportunity for my children to grow in character and for me to watch them. Whether or not my friends understand or not is irrelevant. Those I meet who do understand are truly my friends. The others, I have concluded, are only casual observers.

Jerry Circelli is a stay-at-home father of two children and free-lance writer in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Two years ago he left his job as a senior writer for an aerospace company to spend more time with his children.

Correction

A few items that appeared in our article, "Is your family poison proofed?" (January, 1989) need to be clarified.

1. The recommendation about neutralizing acids is incorrect. The text originally read:

"If you are away from help when a child swallows kerosene, gasoline, lye, or battery acid, the best you can do is dilute and protect. Large amounts of water, bread or milk help and are the easiest to get down..."

"Caustic bases, like lye, can be partially neutralized with acidic foods like grapefruit or orange juice. Neutralize acids with baking soda or other edible bases."

The above procedure for caustic bases and acids is no longer recommended and may be harmful. Instead dilution with milk or water is recommended.

2. Several readers advise that the poinsettia plant is no longer considered toxic. Nonetheless, nausea and vomiting can result from ingestion, and caution is preferable to illness.

3. Keep a one ounce bottle of Syrup of Ipecac in your medicine cabinet and consult your doctor about how and when to use it. Do not use it without the advice of the poison center in your area or your physician.

Taming the 'What ifs!'

By Andrea Brown Su

"A local child was reported missing from his home this morning. The youngster wandered away during a family barbecue."

As the television reporter continued with the news, I began to worry about my own small son.

What if he wandered off while my back was turned?

It is quite common for parents to fear that they will lose a child, or that their child won't be happy or successful in the future.

From the time a child is born, parents include him in their future plans. When that child is suddenly taken from them or is unhappy, their lives are drastically altered. They feel that they have lost control over their own or their child's future.

For practical reasons these concerns are necessary.

Young children are defenseless. Without their parents' interests in their health and welfare, they would not survive. But sometimes these concerns grow out of proportion and can harm both parent and child.

Kelly, the mother of four children, remembers that worry dominated her life when her children were young.

"When they were infants I kept thinking 'What if they don't wake up.'"

"When they were toddlers it was 'What if they choke on something they've picked up from the rug.'"

She remembers that when they were older it was "What if they don't make friends" and "What if they're learning disabled."

If the "What ifs?" are becoming more frequent than the "What is," it's time to pause and rethink how you are acting.

Do you spend more time worrying about the future than appreciating the present?

Do the "What ifs" keep you from participating in activities because of what might happen?

There are several things you can do when the "What ifs" become too frequent.

• Limit the amount of time each day that you allow yourself to fret.

If you catch yourself worrying other times during the day, stop the thought, and save it for your "worry time."

By allowing yourself a specific time to worry and concentrate on concerns, you'll quickly grow tired of contemplating the same old "What ifs" day in and day out.

Many people find it difficult in the beginning to save their worries for that one time, but once they are in control of their concerns, instead of the concerns controlling them, they often find that after a few minutes of worry time, there is nothing left to worry about.

• Psychologists have found that people who expect bad things to happen report that more bad things do happen to them.

One technique to conquer a negative outlook is to replace each "what if" with a positive thought.

The next time thoughts that your child may do poorly in school creep in, replace them with the thought that your child will enjoy school.

Not only will this help you to think optimistically, the positive thinking will also help your child to think positively.

• If one particular concern keeps reoccurring, explore the concern in detail.

Get facts about your concern from the experts, then analyze the information. Usually the chances of something happening are much smaller than we realize.

For example, a common concern among parents is that their child will be abducted by a stranger. In truth, most children are taken by a parent involved in a custody dispute. It's important to safeguard against stranger abduction, but by getting the facts, this type of concern could more easily be controlled.

After analyzing the facts, formulate a plan of action in case the concern does become an actuality. By preparing for a potential situation, you can rest easier.

• Live in the present, not in a future which may never happen.

When people concern themselves with what is going on in their immediate environment they have less time to worry, and they are also better prepared to deal with a situation should it arise.

Often worrying about the future leaves us distracted to the present. And it's only in the present that things actually occur.

• Be aware that boredom and a lack of sleep make people susceptible to worry.

It's difficult for most parents to avoid these two culprits. When a good night's sleep seems like a distant memory, and the days at home with the children seem endless, it might be a good time to schedule a nap or an outing to refresh yourself.

• Count your blessings.

One of the greatest gifts we can give to our children is the ability to appreciate what they have in their lives. By reflecting on the good things that we have, our children will come to value the little things in life, too.

Andrea Brown Su is a wife, mother of a 10-month-old son, and a psychologist. She writes on subjects ranging from career planning to women's issues and family life.

Research Briefs

Excerpts from child development research

Young toddlers able to imitate actions watched on television

Even a one-year-old's behavior can be influenced by what he sees on television, says a University of Washington psychologist. Since children under two are exposed to an average of two hours of television a day, that's an interesting finding.

Andrew Meltzoff's experiment involved 120 toddlers between 14 and 24 months old. Results showed that the youngest as well as the oldest could reproduce actions they had first seen presented on television.

The lap-held tots watched a 20-second video showing an unfamiliar adult taking apart and reassembling an unfamiliar toy. Given the same toy immediately after the set was turned off, 13 of 20 14-month-olds were able to duplicate the adult's actions.

Only 2 of 10 same-age youngsters who had not seen the television demonstration were able to manipulate the plaything correctly and only 4 of 10 could dismantle and reassemble the toy after seeing the televised grownup merely handle the toy.

Image lingers

A test of "deferred" imitation indicated that televised images are not fleeting impressions, but stay in 14-month-olds' minds for some time. When 20 who had seen the demonstration on television were given the toy for the first time 24 hours later, 8 were able to manipulate it as successfully as the adult. Of the 10 who had merely seen the grownup handling the plaything, only one could perform the task.

"It is clear that the sights and sounds of television are very much a part of the infant-toddler natural ecology in modern culture," Meltzoff observes in *Child Development.* He believes his data raise the possibility that "exposure to television in the home may potentially influence infant behavior more than heretofore contemplated."

It's real

The study's findings also contradict a major theory on the development of infant perception, the belief that the ability to relate a two-dimensional representation of the real world (a television image, for example) to three-dimensional real-life is a skill that must be learned over an extended time.

Results of the present study "show that infants as young as 14 months can use this type of (2-D) information to guide their real-world action."

The researcher says he took special precautions to ensure that the television image the infants saw was as "2-D" as possible. He used a black and white smaller-than-lifesize television picture, whose flat surface reflected the switched-on room lights.

The study data were also "the first to show that infants younger than the (classically cited) 18-24 month age period can perform deferred imitation even when there is some distancing"—such as that between the television image and the infant's imitation of it 24 hours later.

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The American Baby TV Show

On CBN Cable Network

Mondays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT
Fridays	12:30 PM ET	9:30 AM PT

These brief reports are presented to add to readers' general knowledge of research being done in the child development field. Inclusion of an item does not imply that Growing Child recommends or endorses a particular practice, theory, or finding.

Fun things to do in September

For children 6 months to 6 years

Growing Child
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Find a green leaf and press it in a book. Compare it to a yellow leaf next month.	**2** Are there any parades to see over the holiday weekend?
3 Pack a lunch and go to the park today.	**4** Labor Day. Enjoy the day together as a family.	**5** Look for shapes in your house. By the way, what is a "shape?"	**6** Set an alarm clock--hide it--and then have someone try to find it when it goes off.	**7** Make a tunnel out of a big cardboard box.	**8** Go outside and look around. What colors do you see?	**9** Lie on your stomach and move around in a circle.
10 Play a game outside with a ball.	**11** Sing "Do-Re-Mi".	**12** Count your toes. What about your toenails?	**13** Take a bath and use the words pour, float, wet and dry.	**14** Snack on sliced banana bites.	**15** National Poetry Day. Celebrate by reading a you-know-what.	**16** Put some bird seed out for the birds (especially as it gets colder, too.)
17 Try a new recipe today.	**18** Which side is your right? Your left?	**19** Mickey Mouse's Birthday. Celebrate by singing "Zippety-Do-Da".	**20** What is your favorite bedtime story?	**21** First day of Autumn.	**22** Listen to a style of music you've never listened to before.	**23** How many things can you do with a paper towel tube?
24 Cut a slice of bread with a decorative cookie cutter.	**25** Give a friend a big hug.	**26** Johnny Appleseed's Birthday. Oh my, oh my, have a piece of apple pie!	**27** Hang a mirror at Youngster's level so he can easily see himself.	**28** Practice zipping and unzipping.	**29** Sing a lullaby before bed.	**30** Rosh Hashanah.

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